Christian Unity

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Christian Unity

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PREFACE

THIS small book contains the substance of four lectures which I delivered, first at St Mary's Church, Oxford, and then at King's College, London. I have to thank the Rev. F. R. Barry, the Vicar of St Mary's, for kindly giving me the first opportunity, and the Rev. Dr Matthews, the Dean of King's College, for giving me the second opportunity.

These lectures are based upon the Bampton Lectures on *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion* which I delivered in 1920. During the years since they were written I have not found anything which has induced me seriously to modify the opinion that I then expressed, and a good deal to strengthen the position then maintained. Certain suggestions with regard to Christian reunion were put forward, and although they have been severely criticised in some quarters, they appear to have agreed with the tendencies that have since developed. All the questions here discussed and the lines on which we may approach the subject of Christian reunion, will come under review at the approaching

Lambeth Conference, and it seemed to me that it might be useful to restate my arguments in a shorter and more popular form.

I must express my obligation to the Student Christian Movement for their kindness in undertaking the publication of this book.

A. C. GLOUCESTR:

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March 28, 1930.

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Christian Unity

CHAPTER I

THE NEED OF UNITY

I SUPPOSE that some people when they hear that I am lecturing on "Christian Reunion," will say: "Why cannot he leave it alone? We get on very well as we are. Some people like one Church, some like another. Some people like to worship in one way, some in another. Why not leave well alone? These things do not matter."

This may sound plausible, but a little further consideration will show that, at any rate from the Christian point of view, we cannot take that attitude. Reunion is something both practical and very much before us at the present time. It is becoming the most important and the most vital question before the Christian Church, and although perhaps ideals may be vague and aspirations a little unreal, undoubtedly, both inside and outside the Church, there is a strong and growing feeling that if Christianity is to influence the world at the present day as it should do, it must manage to present a more

united front. People do not believe that the points on which Christian churches differ are so important as they were once thought to be. The world asks why Christianity is so divided, and the more thoughtful Christians feel the justice of that question. I propose, to begin with, to discuss shortly the need of unity, and I will say something about it from the point of view of the Christian ideal, as a practical question, and in relation to the mission field.

I

It is true that from one point of view Christianity is intensely individual. It is based upon the idea of the permanent value of each human soul and of each man's individual responsibility. We are alone and individually responsible for the way in which we live our life in the world before God; alone we must render account to Him for the way in which we have used our life here; alone we are judged. This is true. But in relation to the world and to our fellow-men, Christianity is essentially corporate. Its most fundamental virtue is brotherly love, and that implies definite social relation with all those around us. It implies a sphere which, undoubtedly, must be as wide-reaching as humanity, within which that virtue can be exercised. So Christianity is a fellowship and a comradeship, and it should be as wide in its content as the human race.

It is obvious, then, that the Christian divisions which separate us from one another, which prevent us from exercising in any real or effective way our brotherly relations, which destroy our fellowship in Christ, are fundamentally inconsistent with the Christian ideal. If, then, we are working for Christian unity, we are really working to carry out the teaching of our Lord and to make it effective in the world. There have been times in the past, and there might be at the present day occasions when an attitude of apparent antagonism to unity might be necessary for loyalty to what was, so far as we could judge, the teaching of Christ. It is quite possible to hold that in the service of God Christian divisions have had their part to play and may have to do so in the future. It is indeed difficult for the human mind to grasp the fullness of the gospel, and different aspects of the Christian Faith have undoubtedly been preserved and developed in separated communities. When we pray, we pray for that unity which is agreeable to our Lord's will. We need not expect that complete unity will come until the Kingdom of God is fully established, but Christian unity is the only possible ideal, and in working for that we are working for the fuller realisation and comprehension of the gospel of Christ. Such is the theoretical side of our ideal. We shall have to dwell upon it further when we consider the meaning of the Christian Church. Unless

we could feel that unity was an essential element in Christianity, our position would not be as strong as it is; but undoubtedly it is the practical needs of to-day that turn people's attention to the desirability of unity.

Let us illustrate this. And first let us take the smallest unit—a Christian parish. I suppose the ideal of a parish is that all those who live within a certain area should be united together in their Christian life. The Church should be the centre not only of religious but of social unity. All the parish should meet together in religious worship and in particular in the Holy Communion. Whatever social distinctions there might be, whatever differences of rich and poor, they should be merged in the unity of the Christian Church. That is our ideal, but how seldom is it possible to carry it out completely. We all of us, no doubt, know some parishes which approach that ideal, where the only difficulties that arise are those caused by the inevitable imperfections of human nature, but in many parishes divisions do a great deal to injure the unity and fellowship of parish life.

I would now pass from the parish to the nation. Religion ought surely to be a great unifying principle in the nation, binding it together and strengthening its spiritual life. We know how different are the actual facts both in this country and in many others, and we know what real harm disunion causes. It is not as serious with us, for example, as the

disunion in Ireland, where the evils of Christian divisions are more apparent than, perhaps, anywhere else, but even with us it has most serious consequences. It certainly prevents the religious conscience of the nation exercising the influence that it ought to do. At the present day one of the commonest excuses which people make for neglect of religion and religious observances is the disunion of Christians. Consider the effect on our educational system. We have, at the present time, a semi-secularised national educational system which is continuously growing more secular than it was, and this arises mainly because of religious disunion. If we were a spiritually united people, really caring for religion and the things of religion, it is my belief that many of our most serious troubles would come to an end.

Then, thirdly, let us turn to the international aspect. The particular claim of Christianity is that all national and racial distinctions should be merged in the one unity of Christ. It is clear to us that that is just what does not happen. If I pass from England to France I find myself separated from the religious life of the country; if I pass from France to Germany I find another division; if I pass from Germany to Russia again I find Christian divisions. But it is even more serious than that. In the history of the last four hundred years I suppose that some of the most devastating wars that have arisen have been caused by our religious divi-

sions, and at the present time some of the factors which make for unrest in the Eastern parts of Europe come from religious differences. Now there is a desire among thoughtful people to bring to an end, as far as may be possible, war between Christian peoples. But do you think that our League of Nations, and our other organisations for peace, will be able to be permanently effective unless there is a real spiritual unity behind them? The same desire which makes us wish to draw together the nations of Europe in a closer confederation, ought to make us desire to establish a really spiritual union, a united Christianity throughout these countries. We may be appalled at the difficulty of the ideal, but that that is what we should desire and work for, I do not think that we can doubt.

And I would point out that this international unity cannot be entertained unless it is a completely united Christianity that we create. There are some people who are prepared to acquiesce in or to work for smaller unions. No doubt the end that we desire may have to come slowly, by gradually bringing together those Churches which are nearer to one another, but our aim from the first must be complete Christian unity. We cannot be content with anything such as a united Protestantism or a union of all the Episcopal Churches or any such small and inadequate ideals. From the very first we must aim at a completely united

Christianity, even if we are content to reach that end step by step. We may unite, in the first place, with those nearest to us, but it will make a great difference whether the union that we are aiming at is a complete or an imperfect one. Before any great movement can be carried out there must be much preparatory work. The result that finally comes is the product of a long period of preparation and of much thought and intellectual effort, and that should, from the beginning, be directed to as complete a union of all Christian people as is possible.

I think that this consciousness of the need of union will become intensified if we look at the missionary work of the Church. Just as one of the greatest hindrances to the peace of the world lies in the religious disunion of Christian peoples, so another is the fact that so many nations are outside the direct influence of Christianity. Our civilisation is built up on the basis of Christianity, and at the present time this civilisation is exposed to great dangers. We are brought more and more into contact with the great non-Christian races of the world, and more than that, we are teaching them. Up till now our scientific knowledge and training and the fruits of our civilisation have given a marked superiority to the nations of Europe, but the Indian and the Chinaman and the Japanese are being trained now in Western methods. They are learning our

science. They can compete with us in all mechanical arts. We are putting into their hands the weapons which, until recently, were our monopoly. We are quite prepared to sell our aeroplanes to Turks or Russians or Chinese. Many of these nations show themselves apt pupils. They are learning, too, our Western organisation and discipline and military training. Very soon they will be our equals and will be numerically far superior. If we do not give them with our civilisation the religious teaching which has created that civilisation, the danger will be great. If these peoples are to take their proper place in the comity of civilised nations, we must see that they are Christian; but hindrances to the spread of Christianity come through the fact that the Christian Church can make no united or concentrated effort at converting the nations of the world.

It has been pointed out how meaningless are our divisions in the mission field. At home historical conditions and the habits which have grown up give some reality and significance to the divisions between Christians. There is some meaning in the fact that a Scotchman is a Presbyterian. The Church of England, with all its characteristics, has a real meaning for English people, whether at home or abroad. Lutheranism is bound up with the history of the German peoples. But none of these separatist ideals has any meaning in the new countries to which

our missionaries go. We do not go, or at any rate we should not go, to make the heathen members of the Church of England. We go to make them Christians, and the fundamental distinction is between a heathen and a Christian, between those who are baptised and those who are not baptised.

As a thoughtful Indian Christian will tell you, the question whether he is a Presbyterian, or a Congregationalist, or a Methodist, or an Anglican, does not in the least depend upon any interest or desire of his own but purely on the accident of geographical position. If he lives in an area in which the Wesleyan missions have worked, he will be a Wesleyan. If he lives in a village where there are Anglican missions, he will be an Anglican. To him the distinction between Christianity and heathenism is the one outstanding fact. Quite naturally he is irritated by these divisions. If he changes his locality he attaches himself to the Christian Church in his new locality. There may be some slight difference in customs, but that is not what matters to him. What matters to him is the body of people who will give him strength and courage to remain separated from the ancestral traditions of his country.

Then, secondly, these divisions cause weakness in missionary enterprise, weakness which arises from competition between different religious bodies for converts, from want of uniformity of religious discipline, from a

number of inadequate and poorly endowed institutions. All the evils which arise from disunion at home are intensified, and where the Christian Church ought to show a united front to the heathen world, there will be nothing but division.

Then, thirdly, there is in many countries a growing nationalism. A Christian in India wants to be an Indian Christian. He wants to unite his own people on a Christian basis. He wants to create for India one united Church. He does not want to be an American or an Englishman. He wants to learn what he can from both American and Englishman, but he wants to create his own national Christian Church. It is clear to the thoughtful observer that whatever may be the temporary influence of our missionaries, the peoples of these great and ancient races, if they are going to be Christians, will desire to have a Christianity which responds to their spiritual needs. Reunion is something which we desire at home, but we recognize that it must come slowly because of inherited conditions from which it is difficult to escape. Reunion in the mission field, when once the native churches have begun to grow up, is an urgent and imperative necessity, and any European church which does not take part in the movement will soon find itself left out in the progress of events.

2

The motives for Christian unity are strong, and it might be thought that the accomplishment would not be so difficult, but when we turn from the ideal to the actual we find that there are obstacles which, though not insuperable, make the task one which cannot lightly be accomplished.

I think I should put first the strong conservatism which always prevails in religious matters. To most people their religion is associated closely with some particular form of worship, or building, or society. To most people their religion is very largely a question of habit, and anything which breaks down habits may easily break up the religious feelings and hopes which are associated with them. The religious person is strongly, often fanatically, attached to the forms which have helped to shape his life. This makes in small and in great things a change in religious matters very difficult unless there has been a real stirring of people's spirit, when it may well be that they will break away from all the old restraints and look forward eagerly for something in the future.

Of course there are fundamental differences of opinion which, as long as they prevail, would form a quite insuperable obstacle. One, though not the only cause of Christian reunion, has been a protest against what were believed to

be errors in religion, and until one side or other is converted, or until both alike have realised that the points on which they differ are merely varying expressions of a more fundamental truth, they cannot be brought together. Some of the differences have arisen from differences of belief, which are perhaps fundamental; far more have come from a want of sense of proportion. Some particular form of doctrine has temporarily assumed quite unreal importance. It is either looked upon as a fatal error or enthusiastically championed, but when the circumstances which caused the controversy have passed away it is realised that the error was on something of comparatively minor importance. There has been further the intellectual desire to create a clean-cut logically developed scheme, and religious opinions which were really only deductions from more fundamental truths have been looked upon as of essential importance. All these causes of difference would pass away if people's minds began to be fixed on the fundamental truths and to look at these variations in that light.

There is, further, a certain timidity which prevents us from going forward. The old established ways are so easy to follow in. We are used to them. They give a feeling of security, and anything which might seem to break them down must inevitably be looked upon with suspicion. Yet, if we look back in history, we shall find that all the great move-

ments forward and steps in the progress of Christian religion have been undertaken by those who have had the courage to break away from the established order of things. The most notable is perhaps the first great decision which was taken by the Christian Church in its corporate capacity at the Council of Jerusalem. The points at issue seem to us trivial now. It is difficult for us to conceive any one being so tenacious of Jewish custom that they could not realise what the spread of the gospel might mean, but really at the time, when the decision had to be made by men who were brought up in the conventional Judaism, it was a difficult enough thing to allow in any such matters the freedom which the new Church demanded.

Undoubtedly reunion will be difficult. It demands courage and faith. To move too rapidly might increase evils rather than diminish them. Some considerable period of thought and preparation may be necessary before we can venture. It may be, perhaps, that a new generation will gradually grow up with ideas of Christian unity which will enable them to look with a better sense of proportion at the points on which we differ. But however great the difficulty, we must have courage and hope as well as caution. There comes a time in history when a choice is put before a nation or a church, when we are given the opportunity of deciding whether we will go forward with the rising tide or be stranded in some back-

water. I am not certain, but I think that is the issue before us to-day.

3

How then can we proceed in this matter? When we come to examine tendencies towards reunion or intercommunion at the present time, we shall find that there are two different methods prevailing, and that there is a considerable amount of friction between the supporters of the two sides. The one looks forward to organic union, to building up a united Church with a strong basis of Church order, and it would suggest, therefore, that, at any rate to begin with, we should start with those churches which are most closely akin to one another, and see how far we can diminish the many varying forms of difference between them. But there is another view which is quite different. It would suggest that, at any rate as a preliminary, we should be satisfied with something very much short of organic union, with a sort of loose federation. Each church would preserve its own customs and ways and ministry and Church order. There would be free intercommunion between all the different bodies, and it would be hoped that they would gradually grow together into something perhaps closer.

Connected with this there is another point on which grave differences prevail, and that

is the place which intercommunion must hold in any scheme of reunion. One set of people look upon intercommunion, the sharing in the Lord's Supper, as the ultimate goal to be attained. We must first be united and then we can join together in the celebration of the Holy Communion. But there is another view that the best means of securing reunion is by the method of open communion. It was the difference between these two points of view which was really the dividing issue at the Lausanne Conference. The first point of view would say that we must think out our points of difference, we must build up our scheme of union, we must discuss all the subjects at which we are at issue, and when we have got a proper scheme then we can unite together. The other is much more hasty in its action. It is largely indifferent to questions of order and creeds. Orders, forms, ceremonies do not really matter. It would say, let us unite particularly in the Holy Communion, which is the great sacrament of unity. That unity of spirit which we shall thus attain will ultimately, no doubt, lead to something closer.

The distinction of these two methods has been brought prominently forward by movements of thought which have been taking place in America. A certain Dr Ainslie, who belongs to a religious body of comparatively recent origin called "The Disciples of Christ," who are characterised by having no orders and

no creeds, has stirred up a movement in many ways the opposite to that at Lausanne. At the Lausanne Conference delegates of various Churches met together, they put forward their different points of view, they tried to find a common basis of action and to prepare the way for creating a united Church. To Dr Ainslie all that is pure waste of time. He is entirely indifferent to any such matters, and he has started a Christian Unity League Pact which he asks every one to sign, and which runs as follows :

"We Christians of various churches, believing that only in a co-operative and united Christendom can the world be Christianized, deplore a divided Christendom as being opposed to the Spirit of Christ and the needs of the world. We desire to express our sympathetic interest in and prayerful attitude toward all conferences, small and large, that look toward the reconciliation of the divided church of Christ.

"We acknowledge the equality of all Christians before God and propose to practise this principle as far as possible in all our spiritual fellowships. We will strive to bring the law and practices of our several communions into conformity with this principle, so that no Christian shall be denied membership in any of our churches, or the privilege of participation in the observance

of the Lord's Supper, and that the competence of Christian ministers of communions other than our own to exercise the functions of a fully Christian and valid ministry shall not be denied by reason of differences in forms of ordination. Irrespective of denominational distinctions, we pledge to be brethren one to another in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, whose we are and whom we serve."

All differences in fact are to be ignored. We are to act as if we agree and were united. Everywhere there is to be open communion. This proposal has stirred up the Christian world of America, and, as so often happens, these advocates of Christian unity are becoming so eager in their quest that they are prepared to anathematise all those who are not prepared to follow at once in their steps.

So I read again the question asked (this also comes from America): "Is the Protestant Episcopal Church a Christian Church"? The Episcopal Church has, although not unanimously, rejected those proposals. It holds, as we in the Church of England have been inclined to hold, that intercommunion is to be the goal and not the means, and this has aroused the gravest indignation. "Christ," it is stated, "receives non-episcopalians at His Table. Can the Episcopal Church call itself Christian if it rejects at the Holy Communion those whom

Christ receives? Does the Episcopal Church assume the right to exercise prerogatives which are superior to those exercised by Jesus Christ?"

On what authority these statements are made it is a little difficult to say. If we were to model our conduct on the example of Christ, it would be that we should be very careful indeed whom we admitted to communion. Our Lord Himself at the Last Supper admitted only, so far as we are aware, the twelve Apostles. The Holy Communion was to be the great rite for the myriads of His followers, but at the beginning it was confined to those most intimately associated with Him. They were the nucleus of the Church. Are we then quite certain that an indiscriminate admission of all alike to Communion would be in accordance with His will? I notice that a similar proposal has been put forward in the "Modern Churchman" as the Modernist programme for Christian unity. Clearly it is a matter of grave importance that we should consider which is the right way in this matter. I will at present confine myself to making certain suggestions to you on these points.

What is the place of communion in a scheme of reunion? The Anglican Church seems generally to have held a somewhat strict view about admitting to communion. There is a very good reason for that. It does not necessarily mean that we deny the sacraments of

other religious bodies, but it means this. Holy Communion should be the great act of Christian brotherhood. There is a great element of unreality in uniting together in it until we are quite certain of our Christian brotherhood. Our relations with other religious bodies may be more friendly than they were, but there are grave differences of opinion between us, and we cannot pretend that we are in close fellowship with them nor that there is any real desire for unity among the majority of them. To some people these enthusiastic and unreal joint celebrations seem irreverent, almost perhaps a little blasphemous. We are pretending to be one and we are not one. It very seldom happens that short cuts enable you to get very much quicker to your goal. Often they mean that you lose your way. I think we can notice also that all the actual attempts at reunion which have been successful have been based upon careful and prolonged negotiations, and they have not ignored the questions of creeds or orders which have been raised but have tried to solve them. Such is the case with the Reunion of the Church of Scotland, with the Methodist Reunion, with the Canadian United Church, and, I think, with the South Indian United Church.

It is, I think, a characteristic at the present day of American Christianity that it ignores the intellectual and historical side. Many of those who came to Lausanne were irritated with

the discussions which went on about matters which they felt to be of little importance. They did not want to solve any of the problems because they had no problems to solve. While those who approached Lausanne from our point of view were gratified at the amount of real unity that seemed to have been attained, those who approached it from the American point of view looked on it as a complete failure. What they wanted was a general declaration that we were all one and a communion. It seems to be very doubtful indeed whether such a method would lead to the unity which we desire. At the same time, I do not doubt that it is right, when Christians are approaching one another, that the old rigidity of rule should be relaxed, and one of the questions which the Lambeth Conference should consider with care is the question under what conditions and how far those who are still separated from us should be admitted to communion at our altars, when we are really drawing closer to one another.

I should like to close these introductory remarks with a note of warning. I have noticed in some quarters a feeling of impatience which may have the effect of preventing the reunion which many profess to be eager for.

It is stated that "the Disciples of Christ" was founded with the idea that if a church was founded without creeds or orders or any of those things on which people differed, it would form a suitable basis for reunion. Every one

could unite on this vague and general acceptance of Christianity. An acute observer has noted that all that has been accomplished has been the creation of one more Christian sect which all the other religous bodies look upon with jealousy and suspicion.

And I note too a certain spirit, almost of fanaticism on this question of open or united communion. I have given an instance from an American paper. I have found the same spirit here. Some people talk as if the refusal of communion were an unchristian act. They will not listen to reason. They want to force their own beliefs on others. They are intolerant of any difference of outlook. To these persons I would say this. It is just that mental attitude, that spirit of intolerance which has always been in the past the most fruitful cause of disunion. It is this spirit which has created heresies and schisms, and if it is once brought into the arena of discussions concerning reunion, the movement will fail.

The Church of England has had its own rules in the past, and in the opinion of many people they were rendered necessary by the circumstances of the time. It would have been most unreal to admit to the sacrament of brotherly love those who denounced the Church of England in the way that was customary not so long ago. A new spirit now prevails. We are approaching one another in a new way. There is a new mind among us. It may be

that the time has come when we should revise our rules and customs, when without a sense of unreality we can unite more readily in communion. That is a question which will be considered with the greatest care. But if the intolerant spirit I have spoken of is introduced, the whole movement towards reunion will be thrown back.

CHAPTER II

THE UNITY OF THE FAITH

It is sometimes said that the divisions between Christians are so deep and profound that to think of such a thing as Christian unity is impossible. This is fundamentally a mistake. It is quite true that the superficial differences between Christians are apparently great. The number of different bodies into which Christians are divided is large, and their relations to one another often exhibit much bitterness. But when we pass beneath the surface it will be discovered how superficial most of those differences really are. They do not touch the heart of the subject. There are differences in Church order, differences in theological expression, differences in the conception of authority, differences in sacramental teaching, differences in the externals of worship. It seems a formidable list, but when we come to examine the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, we find that there is a remarkable and perhaps unexpected agreement. There is a quite definite Christian religion which all Christian bodies alike hold, which clearly and definitely distinguishes Christianity from any

other religion, and is the strongest basis both for the building up of an intelligent apologetic, and for the hope of the attainment under the altered conditions of modern society of a real Christian unity.

I

Let me say a word to begin with about the first—an intelligent apologetic. It is often asserted as a reason for not accepting Christianity, that there is no certainty as to what Christianity really is. It is maintained that while the conclusions of science are something fixed and definite and therefore come to us with an authority which we cannot doubt, the doctrines of religion are uncertain and changing. It is not possible to know what to believe, and therefore a wise man will keep himself aloof from organised Christianity and will possess his soul in isolation. Now, as a matter of fact, both these statements are untrue. Or rather we ought perhaps to say that science and religion differ as to the nature of the certainty with which their teaching can be held. In science there is an agreement which within certain limits means certainty about the minor generalisations, and especially concerning that part of the knowledge of nature which forms the basis of its practical application. On the other hand, when we come to the higher generalisations and to anything which professes to teach us about reality, there is

such continuous change in what we are told as to make it clear that we are not dealing with matters capable of scientific proof but with hypotheses. We have within certain limits an extraordinary and increasing power, arising from our knowledge of the forces of nature. The advance of scientific discovery and of applied science has been marvellous, and the continual verification of experience shows us how true our conclusions are. But at that point both our knowledge and our power cease. We have no real knowledge, for example, of what electricity is. Of the real significance of the universe we have no knowledge. We may have many hypotheses. The whole presentation of the scientific aspect of the universe has changed in the last few years, and the dogmatic conclusions of a former generation are looked upon as an old-fashioned orthodoxy. It is claimed that science is progressive, and to a certain extent that claim can be justified, but if knowledge is progressive it is a certain sign that what we are taught at the present moment is only relatively true.

Now with religion the certainty is different. As regards the external presentment of it there is very great variety, but when we come to the fundamental doctrines which it teaches, although there is a sort of fringe which holds those doctrines in a reduced and attenuated form, yet the vast majority of Christians and of the churches or sects or societies or

communions, whatever we like to call them, teach the same Christianity and are agreed in their beliefs. There is some difference, though not very great, in the matter of presentation, and there are different degrees of knowledge and ignorance, but on the fundamental points there is no variation. It is this position that I have now to justify.

2

The first fundamental belief of Christianity is that there is one God. This is put forward as the one rational account which can be given of the world, and of human existence, and is adhered to tenaciously by all Christians as the only belief which gives hope and meaning to life. This belief in God is the belief in Him as the creator and sustainer of the universe, and therefore the explanation of things. God is Reality. It is a belief in a God who is righteous, and if God be righteous that means that for us righteousness is a fundamental characteristic of the universe, and from this comes the whole Christian rule of conduct. It makes a Christian quite certain that whatever may be the apparent result of his action he must do what is right, and that the ultimate well-being of mankind will depend upon the extent to which they are influenced by righteousness. Then the Christian believes that God is our Father, that is he believes in

the providence of God. He believes that there is a divine purpose in the history of the world. Then finally comes his belief in God as love. This belief is revealed to us in and through the life and work of Jesus Christ, but it is in itself part of the reality of the Godhead. If God be all these things He must be a person, for purpose and righteousness and love have no meaning except in regard to a person.

This then is the Christian belief as it is usually held. It is a tremendous doctrine, and its reactions on life are numerous. It is not always realised how great they are, but the point I wish to emphasise at the moment is that here we have a universal Christian belief sufficient of itself to mark off Christianity from all those who do not accept such an explanation of the reality of things.

Then next the whole Christian Church accepts the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. That means that Jesus, the Christ or Messiah of the Jews, was Himself the Son of God really and essentially, and therefore divine, that as the Son of God He could reveal God to man, and it is through His revelation that we know God in an especial way as Righteousness, and Father, and Love.

But this revelation of God in Christ is not a mere theoretic statement of Reality It is a gospel for mankind. A gospel which gives man the hope of salvation and of immortality,

and for those who hope it is a remedy for all the ills of human life.

All Christians alike believe in God's Holy Spirit, both as a fact of Christian experience and as part of the inheritance of Christian tradition. So all Christian churches are prepared to express their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, and as the basis and justification of that doctrine, the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement.

And then, on the basis of that, comes our Christian morality. The Christian morality is in its principles and assumptions fundamentally different from all other systems of morality, even from those which have been derived from it. We may sum it up by saying that it is in accordance with the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, and that aspect of the Godhead and the universe which Jesus Christ has revealed to us. It is a morality based on principle and not on rule, and means a life of love and sacrifice. "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

I have dwelt at some length upon this unity of belief because if we keep our eyes fixed on the differences between Christian bodies we lose our sense of proportion and do not realise how tremendously the fundamental beliefs transcend the differences.

Now this unity of Christian belief has been quite definitely brought out by the

Lausanne Conference. Although unfortunately the Roman Catholic Church was not represented there, almost every other Christian society was, and the Conference with real unanimity issued a statement of the gospel as the message of the Christian Church, which states in informal language the meaning of Christianity. The document there accepted was in the following year adopted by the Missionary Conference at Jerusalem, and has, I believe, attained a more or less universal approval. Nor can it be doubted but that the Church of Rome, although it might consider it inadequate and might wish to add to it, would agree in accepting what it states as a true exposition of the content of Christian doctrine.

This statement seems sufficiently important for me to give it you in full.

THE CHURCH'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD—THE GOSPEL

"The message of the Church to the world is, and must always remain, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The Gospel is the joyful message of redemption, both here and hereafter, the gift of God to sinful man in Jesus Christ.

"The world was prepared for the coming of Christ through the activities of God's Spirit in all humanity, but especially in His revelation

as given in the Old Testament; and in the fullness of time the eternal Word of God became incarnate, and was made man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, full of grace and truth.

"Through His life and teaching, His call to repentance, His proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of judgment, His suffering and death, His resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and by the mission of the Holy Spirit, He has brought to us forgiveness of sins, and has revealed the fullness of the living God, and His boundless love towards us. By the appeal of that love, shown in its completeness on the Cross, He summons us to the new life of faith, self-sacrifice, and devotion to His service and the service of men.

"Jesus Christ, as the crucified and the living One, as Saviour and Lord, is also the centre of the world-wide Gospel of the Apostles and the Church. Because He Himself is the Gospel, the Gospel is the message of the Church to the world. It is more than a philosophical theory; more than a theological system; more than a programme for material betterment. The Gospel is rather the gift of a new world from God to this old world of sin and death; still more, it is the victory over sin and death, the revelation of eternal life in Him Who has knit together the whole family in heaven and on earth in the communion of saints,

united in fellowship of service, of prayer, and of praise.

"The Gospel is the prophetic call to sinful man to turn to God, the joyful tidings of justification and of sanctification to those who believe in Christ. It is the comfort of those who suffer; to those who are bound, it is the assurance of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The Gospel brings peace and joy to the heart, and produces in men self-denial, readiness for brotherly service, and compassionate love. It offers the supreme goal for the aspirations of youth, strength to the toiler, rest to the weary, and the crown of life to the martyr.

"The Gospel is the sure source of power for social regeneration. It proclaims the only way by which humanity can escape from those class and race hatreds which devastate society at present, into the enjoyment of national well-being and international friendship and peace. It is also a gracious invitation to the non-Christian world, East and West, to enter into the joy of the living Lord.

"Sympathising with the anguish of our generation, with its longing for intellectual sincerity, social justice and spiritual inspiration, the Church in the eternal Gospel meets the needs and fulfils the God-given aspirations of the modern world. Consequently, as in the past, so also in the present, the Gospel is the only way of salvation. Thus, through His Church, the living Christ still says to men

'Come unto me! . . . He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'"

Now I ask you to consider the significance of this important document. Here is a stupendous belief which concerns the reality of the world and the destiny of man. It affects most profoundly human life. On this belief all Christians, so far as they are Christians, are agreed. We are so accustomed to this agreement that we seem to forget it. Yet if we are agreed on really everything that matters, on God, on Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Ghost, and the Christian life, have we any excuse for allowing differences of opinion on very minor matters to keep us separate? Here in a country nominally at any rate Christian, we are so accustomed to this common belief that it does not impress us. Perhaps the background which Soviet Russia is now offering to European Christianity may make us recognise it. In the mission field it is a more obvious fact and reunion is easier. But whether at home or abroad there is this fundamental unity in faith and it ought to mean a unity in religious life. We have one faith, there should be one body.

3

We come now to a more difficult point. Granted that there is this unity of belief, how

should it be expressed? You will remember that the Lambeth Conference laid down the Holy Scriptures, the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds, as the basis of Christian unity. The Lausanne Conference has followed that but in a somewhat different form. It states: "Notwithstanding the differences in doctrine among us, we are united in a common Christian Faith which is proclaimed in the Holy Scriptures and is witnessed to and safeguarded in the Œcumenical Creed, commonly called the Nicene, and in the Apostles' Creed, which Faith is continuously confirmed in the spiritual experience of the Church of Christ."

This carefully worded statement is rendered necessary by the difference of custom and usage at the present day in the Christian world. In the first place it says quite rightly that what we believe is the Christian Faith. It is not the Scriptures but the faith which the Scriptures teach. If we recognise that, many of the modern difficulties about the inspiration of the Bible will be more easily solved. It is not the creeds that are the important things but the faith which is taught by the creeds.

The different branches of the Christian Church at the present time take different views of the creeds. In the Orthodox Eastern Church they are looked upon as infallible, or almost infallible; other bodies do not use them at all in worship, and only look upon them as valuable historical documents. Some churches pride themselves upon

being creedless, and claim that this does not detract from but adds to the tenacity with which they hold the Christian Faith. At the present time modernist writers feel the burden of the creeds, they are a little uncertain of the philosophy that they imply, they are doubtful about some of the historical facts, but, equally with others, they will be prepared to accept and believe the doctrines taught by the creeds. The Lausanne Conference then is able to accept the proposals of the Lambeth Conference in the form that the Creeds may be taken to be the standard of the Christian Faith which all accept.

I think that here then we have, even in the expression of our belief, a real and substantial ground of agreement. But now I want to draw your attention to another side of this question. It is not only that the doctrines we have spoken of are the faith, they contain everything which can be claimed as the faith. It is important to emphasize this fact which I have dwelt on before; I think I must dwell upon it again.

The Council of Ephesus, after accepting the original Nicene Creed, continues as follows:—

"These things then having been so determined, the Holy Synod decrees that it be not lawful to anyone to put forward, or indeed to compose or construct, any other creed besides that drawn up by the Holy Fathers assembled in the city of Nicaea with the help of the Holy Spirit."

Then follow the penalties and anathemas. The Council of Chalcedon at the end of its Exposition of the Faith adds:—

"These things therefore having been formulated by us with all possible care and exactness, the holy Œcumenical Council decrees that it shall be unlawful for anyone to produce another faith (πίστις) whether by writing or composing or holding or teaching others. And those who presume either to frame another faith or to publish or teach or deliver another creed (σύμβολον) to those who desire to turn to the acknowledgment of the truth from heathenism or Judaism or from any heresy whatsoever," etc. Here follow penalties and anathemas.

These two extracts make it clear, I think, that it was the wisdom of these councils not only to define but to limit the scope of the Catholic Faith as of obligation to believe. The first refers to the Creed of the Nicene Council, the second to the Creed of Constantinople —the Creed which we call the Nicene—and to the explanation of it put forth at Chalcedon. All this means that the Catholic authority of the Church confines the Catholic Faith to the fundamental beliefs of Christianity. We have, as good Christians and loyal members of the Church, to accept the Creed, and not to impose any other belief on others as a necessary condition of membership of the Church.

I think you will find the same principle asserted if you study carefully the Athanasian

Creed. We are usually concerned, perhaps over-concerned, with what it teaches. It is supposed to be a burden on the conscience of the Church. Whether that be so or not, it is equally important to realise how it limits the Catholic Faith. It gives a clear exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation, and then it says quite simply "This is the Catholic Faith." It is that and no more than that. I think that this is a point of great importance, for there have been and still are tendencies to burden the mind of the Christian by adding many other Articles of Faith as of obligation, and by including in the term "the Catholic Faith" other propositions of quite a different character.

There are three directions in which particularly this has taken place. At the time of the Reformation, and in almost all the Articles of Religion and Confessions then drawn up, we find an attempt made to solve the many problems connected with grace, justification and predestination, and solutions, sometimes as appears to us now one-sided, have been put forward as part of the true faith, and the holding of them as necessary to salvation. It is quite clear that, however interesting or important speculation at different times on these subjects may have been, no conclusions arrived at can be looked upon as in any way part of the Catholic Faith; and, as a matter of fact, at the present time all these are questions on which

the great majority of Christians are prepared to agree to differ, if they do differ.

A second line would be doctrines and theories about the Christian ministry. I propose in another lecture to discuss this question of the ministry, and it is by no means one which is unimportant, but we have no ground or justification for considering any theory of the ministry or any customary practice as part of the Christian Faith.

The same may be said of beliefs about the sacraments. Here again I hope to treat the question more fully. All I would say now is that all the various attempts which have been made to divide the Christian Church on the subject of sacramental belief are, in my opinion, quite clearly inconsistent with Catholic principles.

The Christian Faith is really certain simple doctrines. The Christian Creed is the standard which teaches us those doctrines. In contrast with that there are the many Articles of Division, which we owe to the time of the Reformation, the Decrees of the Council of Trent, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Augsburg Confession, the Formula Concordiae, the Westminster Confession, and many others. These are all Articles of Division, because they make it necessary to hold as a basis of Christian fellowship points which are not really fundamental.[1]

[1] On the importance of the Nicene Creed in the Orthodox Church, cf. Zankov, *The Eastern Orthodox Church*, p. 35. "In reality, however, the Orthodox Church has no single *Symbolic* book, at least not in the Western sense. The only 'symbol'

I am going now to give two illustrations of the way in which, at the present time, some theologians confuse questions of order or opinion with the Catholic Faith. The first I will take from Dr N. P. Williams' work on *Lausanne, Lambeth and South India.*

> "I cannot leave the subject of South India," he writes, "without recording the opinion that the 'Proposed Scheme,' as it now stands, is even more defective and unsatisfactory on the side of Christian doctrine and ethics than on that of ministerial order. Its implied deposition of confirmation from its sacramental dignity as the consummation of Christian initiation, and as the means whereby the positive gifts of the Holy Spirit are conveyed to those who have already received the negative or sin-cancelling effects of baptism, to the place of one amongst two or three alternative methods of admission to full Church membership, will hurt the consciences of many or most English Churchmen. And its failure to enunciate the ideal of the indissolubility of Christian marriage,

of the Church is the Nicæan-Constantinopolitan Creed. The two creeds mentioned before have only local importance, since they were reviewed by local synods. They have no authoritative œcumenical significance, and therefore they must not be used either as absolutely valid or as credal statements. This view is making headway, even if slowly, in modern orthodox theological literature. As Glubokovsky says: 'The Orthodox Church has no symbolic books; its only creed is that of Nicæa. Considering the so-called "symbolic" books as symbolic in the western sense of this term, leads to mistakes and misunderstandings.'"

or indeed any ideal with regard to marriage at all, must be regarded as ominous. The 'Proposed Scheme' does not appear to contain any doctrine of the sacraments, any provision for the possibility of the sinner's 'opening his grief' to a 'discreet and learned minister,' or any security for Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy in the sense defined by the *Quicunque vult* and the Formula of Chalcedon I venture to suggest that the Anglican Communion would gravely compromise its witness to revealed truth and its own catholic character if it were to sanction the union of any part of itself with a Church (such as the Church contemplated by the 'Proposed Scheme' would be) maintaining a standard of doctrine lower or laxer than that embodied in the English Liturgy and Catechism and the first eight of the Thirty-nine Articles."

Now this, I think, just shows that want of proportion of which I have spoken. I would observe that it is not merely the attitude with regard to confirmation that is criticised, but that it is criticised from the point of view of Christian Faith. I shall speak about confirmation later, but you cannot exalt a custom, either of the universal Church or of the Anglican Communion, into the position of being part of the Christian Faith. And so with regard to sacraments. As regards the

Athanasian Creed, here is a proposal to make essential the acceptance of some document besides the Nicene Creed. The Athanasian Creed, as a matter of fact, is of course not accepted in its present form by the Orthodox Church; and, in any case, to make any other creed a necessary basis of union, or any other statement of doctrine, would be just to violate this inherited principle of the limitations as well as the greatness of the Christian Faith.

Perhaps a still more glaring instance of this determination to force private or particular doctrines into the Christian Faith is the statement of the Wesleyan Church, which demands that, as a basis of union, the South Indian Church should deny any doctrine of Apostolic succession. Now that doctrine again I will discuss later. The words "Apostolic succession" conceal a large number of different theories, and in some form it is held by almost everybody. But my point at this moment is, that either to add or to forbid anything as part of the Christian Faith is really contrary to that Faith. If we can once realise the power and the simplicity of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we shall find in that a quite sufficient basis for Christian unity, and the formula put forward by Lausanne for the acceptance of the creed and Scriptures gives us both a basis of sound doctrine and a statement of it which will meet the difficulties of those who are troubled by certain modern problems.

If we look back on the past history of Christianity we shall find that one of the most potent causes of Christian disunion has been this tendency to add to the Christian Creed, and make the acceptance of a dogmatic statement on some subordinate point of Christian doctrine part of the Catholic Faith. The earliest and most glaring example was the *filioque* clause, which was the occasion if not the cause of the greatest of Christian schisms. Then came the imposition of the dogma of *transubstantiation* by the Fourth Lateran Council. The Council of Florence made the *Papal supremacy* a dogma. At the Reformation this passion both for defining the truth on every point of Christian life and faith and of imposing a dogmatic solution on others became the most potent cause of disunion. We shall not be able to bring to an end disunion and to bring back unity until we unite on the simplicity of the Catholic Faith.

It is the aim of these lectures to maintain that Christian unity can come only on a Catholic basis, but that means Catholicity in the true sense of the word. Catholicity means those great principles of faith and order which have been so generally accepted in the Christian Church that they may reasonably be considered to fulfil the Vincentian maxim. The word Catholic is habitually used in a most incorrect way. It is used by Roman Catholics to express that very elaborate system of dogma which was

built up through the Middle Ages, and formulated at the Council of Trent, and has no claim to be considered in any true sense of the word Catholic. It is used by a section of the English Church of a curious selection of opinions, some coming from the Church of Rome, some purely Anglican, some simply academic, which happen to be the fashionable doctrines at the moment in what are called Anglo-Catholic circles. They have really no authority except the opinions of the individuals who teach them. They are not the teaching of any Church. They have no claim to be Catholic. They are singularly variable. They are held with a tenacity in inverse proportion to their importance. It is the disproportionate attention to subordinate opinions that which makes reunion so difficult.

Equally difficult are those who are anxious to define what they do *not* believe. It has been the weakness of Protestantism that it has always been too anxious to deny. If we have to burden our formularies with a series of anathemas we shall soon limit the scope of the Church.

In contrast to all these partial views, I would suggest that a strong basis of reunion is given by the simple and strong Catholic position. There is a Catholic Faith and a Catholic Creed, of which it may be said that they have been always and at all times and in all places believed. They should form a sufficient basis for reunion.

We want nothing more either positive or negative. We want to be Christians and if the Church is Christian it is sufficient. At times erroneous beliefs may arise but they will in due course pass away in a church which is built up on the basis of Catholic Faith and Catholic liberty.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH

THE subject of my lecture to-day is the Church. There is no subject connected with Christian thought about which there is greater ambiguity and confusion. Every one uses the word, but no one defines its meaning. Nor has the Church itself ever defined it, and most statements about it are ambiguous and very often appear meant to be so. In the same document the word "Church" may be found used in half a dozen different senses within quite a short interval. The problem that we have ultimately to solve, if we can, is the answer that we will give to these two questions: The first, What do we mean when we say "I believe in one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church?" And the second, What does our Article mean when it says: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same?" What, on the basis of that

Article, is the Church, and of whom does it consist?

I think we can see the difficulty best if we look at the question from an historical point of view. For the first thousand years of the Church's history it was not hard for most people to know what the Church was. There was clearly one Catholic Church. It extended throughout the civilised world and was an obvious and existing fact. No doubt there were bodies of Christians who had separated from it, but it seemed to most people quite clear that they were not the Church. They were (comparatively at any rate) few in numbers, generally confined to one part of the world, temporary, existing for a time only and then passing away. For the most part they were unimportant. There was quite clearly "one" Church, and as it was the only one and had no real rival it did not seem necessary to do anything towards defining it. There was much which might be said about it, and sometimes was said, but it was, for the most part, descriptive and rhetorical.

A good example is what Cyril of Jerusalem says in his Catechetical Lectures (XVIII, 22-27).

> "Now then let me finish what still remains to be said for the Article, 'In one Holy Catholic Church'—on which though one might say many things, we will speak but briefly.

"It is called Catholic then because it extends over all the world, from one end of the earth to the other; and because it teaches universally and completely one and all the doctrines which ought to come to men's knowledge concerning things both visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly; and because it brings into subjection to godliness the whole race of mankind, governors and governed, learned and unlearned, and because it universally treats and heals the whole class of sins which are committed by soul and body, and possesses in itself every form of virtue which is natural, both in deeds and words, and in every kind of spiritual gifts. . . ."

And later he says.

"For when the first Church was cast off, in the second, which is the Catholic Church, '*God hath set*' as Paul says, '*first Apostles, secondly Prophets, thirdly Teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues*,' and every sort of virtue, I mean wisdom and understanding, temperance and justice, mercy and loving-kindness, and patience unconquerable in persecutions. She, 'by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left by honour and dishonour,' in former times amid persecutions and tribulations crowned the holy martyrs with the varied

and blossoming chaplet of patience, and now in times of peace by God's grace receives her due honours from 'kings and those who are in high places,' and from every sort and kindred of men. And while the kings of particular nations have bounds set to their authority, the Holy Catholic Church alone extends her power without limit over the whole world."

What were the characteristics of a Church, what conditions made a Church, it was not necessary for anyone to say. It was there. It had its creeds and its orders and its sacraments and its discipline, but there was no need to say what was of the essence of the Church or what meaning it really held, or why some things were done and others were not.

But when the schism came between the East and the West a quite new situation arose. Here were two bodies equally claiming to be the Church. If the question had been put to an impartial outsider as to which of them was the Christian Church, he would have found it very difficult to find any standard by which he could judge. Or were there two? And if one was the Church and not the other, what were the reasons that made it such? The difficulty became greater at the time of the Reformation, at any rate for an impartial observer. From that time onwards there were

many churches differing from one another, one on one point, one on another. Which of these was the one Apostolic Church? Or were they all somehow part of the Apostolic Church? Was it the Church of Rome? It claimed that it was the true Church and that there was no other. The impartial outsider might say, There are quite clearly many other Churches, and many of their members are better Christians than those in the Church of Rome: Are we to look upon them as outside the Church? If there are some of them inside and some outside, which and why? What are the characteristics which make people members of the Church? What are the things that go to building up a true Church? In what way is the Church one? These are some of the problems, and they are difficult ones, that we have before us.

I

Let us try and consider some of the opinions and theories which have been advanced on this subject. There are, first of all, those who say: There is but one Church. We are the Church and all others are outside it. That is, at any rate superficially, the claim both of the Church of Rome and of the Orthodox Church of the East. This creates for the members of those churches who believe it a simple and easy position, but it does not create so

easy a one for the impartial investigator who approaches from outside. Here we have two different bodies—the Roman Church and the Orthodox Eastern Church—and both of them say "we are the Church, and in no full or correct way can you say that those who are outside us are members of the Church." It is easy enough for the people within these different bodies to say that they are the Church, but what criterion can they give, and how can we say which is correct? The fact that both make a claim to be the Church, neither admitting the other, makes us wonder whether the claim of either of them can really be considered true.

Moreover, there are, besides these two bodies, an immense number of other Christians. They claim to belong to the Apostolic Church and there seem good grounds for thinking that many of them really represent the teaching and the life of the Apostles better than the two who claim to have a monopoly. The Church of Rome bases its unique position on the Papacy, but our impartial inquirer feels bound to ask what evidence there is for its claims. "Can you convince me of the truth of your position? The Papacy appears to me to represent something very far indeed removed from the teaching of Apostolic times. Can a church which puts this in the forefront claim to be Apostolic? It often appears as if those who are not members of the Church of Rome or the Orthodox Eastern Church are better Christians

than those who are. How is that consistent with the belief that they are not members of the Christian Church?" Although this is the theory of both churches it is difficult to believe that it is really held. Dr Williams reminds us that in a certain sense the Church of Rome recognizes that schismatics and heretics belong to the Church, for they are liable to be proceeded against by the inquisition, which cannot act against those who are not members of it. Moreover, it is customary to make a distinction between the soul and the body of the Church. It may be possible for those who do not belong to the body to belong to the soul. This last theory has no merit but as a means of escaping from a position which, to a thoughtful person, is really intolerable.

As regards the Orthodox Church, it appears that it is modifying very rapidly its former point of view. The friendly relations that it exhibits towards many other religious bodies make it difficult to believe that it thinks the members of those bodies are really outside the Christian Church. It seems to be feeling it necessary to harmonize its opinions with the real facts of religious life. I think this is shown by the following theological discussion by Professor Zankov, in his book *The Eastern Orthodox Church*. It is so important that I think I may be excused for quoting somewhat fully. He is commenting on the notes of the Church.

"These characteristics all belong to the

Church because its Head is Jesus Christ: it is 'one' because its Head is one, and as His body it can be only one: It is 'holy' because He who is the root of which the church is a branch is holy: it is 'Catholic' because 'He is in all:' it is 'Apostolic' because He is the chief of the apostles (He is before all apostles) and because He chose and gave the apostles to the Church.

"What are the views of orthodox Christianity about these fundamental qualities of the Church?

"The Church is one, because it has one Head. It is one body of Christ, from within or without, above or below. It has one faith and one doctrine, one spirit and one heart. It has one source, one cult, one creed, and one goal. In this all are agreed. But then arises the most important and actual question: in the orthodox conception, *which* is this one Church, when we have so many and so different historical churches? And is there such a thing as *one* Church? The latter question always astounds orthodox people: how can faith, how can the heart still hesitate or doubt that, if Christ really existed and exists, and if one Church once existed because Christ ordained it, there is not to-day self-evidently and visibly one Church? To doubt the existence of the visible Church would be to question the corner-stone of orthodox faith. Thus, although there are many and various

churches, still the true and visible Church must exist. And so it does really. But which is it? The general and unanimous answer of Orthodoxy to this question reads: this *one* Church or *the* Church is the old undivided Church, the Orthodox Church. First, for the reason that the Orthodox Church remains true to the old Catholic basis; in other words, because it is the true and faithful continuation of the old and Catholic Church. But then are all other non-orthodox churches not true churches? In my personal opinion there is no authoritative answer to this question in the Orthodox Church, since after the separation between East and West and after the Reformation, no Œcumenical Council has been held which might have given this answer. Such an answer would, of course, have been accepted by the whole community of the orthodox churches.

"The older and almost unanimous opinion on this question was that all non-orthodox churches are not true churches, and therefore that no non-orthodox Christians belong to the Church of Christ. And the practice of various local orthodox churches in the Middle Ages, a practice which continued into comparatively modern times, was based on this opinion. Thus formerly, non-orthodox who entered the Orthodox Church were re-baptized, marriages of non-orthodox were held to be invalid, and marriages with such Christians were not per-

mitted to orthodox Christians. Such strict views and practices were later abandoned, first in the Russian Church at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and later in all the others. This means, of course, a remarkable alteration in the attitude toward non-orthodox churches.

"In Orthodoxy to-day there are two parallel opinions on the problem of the place of non-orthodox churches in the one Church of Christ. One opinion holds that only the Orthodox Church is *the* Church, and that all the others do not belong, since they have fallen away from it. This opinion has its supporters among hierarchs and theologians. It is still occasionally expressed in official statements of local orthodox churches. But this opinion is not consistently maintained, at least in practice, because its supporters do not oppose the present more liberal attitude of the Orthodox Church at large.

"The second opinion holds that the Orthodox Church is the Church of Christ, but that the great historical non-orthodox churches are not to be considered as completely fallen away or separated from the Church of Christ. This position is more a matter of feeling: it has never been precisely formulated or supported in detail. We like to use analogies or images which express the general content of this thought. In general one has the impression that this opinion is essentially as follows: the Church is *one*, and it embraces all who have

been baptized in Christ. Thus just as all belong to the Church, righteous and sinners, so all men, individuals or groups ('churches'), belong to the Church. And just as single members may be ill, so whole groups may be erring or ailing members of the Church. All, saints and sinners, enlightened and erring, sound and sick, belong to the Church, in which through the grace of God and the love of the community, they will become sound and holy. Divisions have been made, chiefly for pedagogical and moral reasons, which form two general sections of the Church, an inner and an outer. But the boundaries of these sections are not absolute, hence the divisions they represent are not absolute. The walls of partition between us do not reach as high as heaven; they do not extend as high as Christ our Head, or as deep as the heart, the Holy Spirit. The Church is indeed a mystery, and the activity of the Divine elements and the love of all is the sublimest miracle. And so in humility and love we pray 'for the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of God's holy churches and the union of them all.' This is the general content of the second opinion which is held by many prominent Church leaders, many theologians and very many simple orthodox Christians, among whom I dare to count myself.

"The fundamental thesis of the Roman Church, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* has never been taught in the Orthodox Church, from

bishop's throne or from the pulpit. And even if some similar expression has been used by individual orthodox theologians, it is only to be understood to imply that in the bosom of the Orthodox Church the Christian most certainly finds the means of Divine grace necessary for his salvation, *without indicating that it is impossible to find the means of grace outside.* Christian groups outside the Orthodox Church are considered Christians, and all taken together they make up the body of Christ. Thus the Encyclical of the Œcumenical Patriarch in 1920 about the foundation of a church union for general religious-ethical and practical Christian co-operation, could be directed 'to all churches of Christ,' and this explains also why it frequently happens that patriarchs of the Orthodox Church in their letters to heads of other churches address them unhesitatingly as 'dear brother in Christ' just exactly as they are accustomed to address the prelates of the Orthodox Church itself.

"This attitude is supported by many important facts of the present general practice of the Orthodox Church, such as the recognition of properly administered baptism together with other sacraments, in other Christian churches, the recognition of the hierarchy of many of these churches, etc. When the Orthodox Church considers the faithful of other churches as true Christians, that is as belonging to Christ (Gal. iii. 27), recognizes in them the

grace of the Holy Spirit, and in many of them recognizes their clergy as well, the three basic elements of principal adherence to the one Christian Church are present. The question of in how far (and which of) these Christians may present deficiencies or obstacles in the attainment of salvation, is a secondary and not a primary one.

"This broad-minded attitude and practice of the Orthodox Church explains its mild attitude toward other churches and their members. Comments to the contrary by Harnack or Kattenbusch are based on misunderstanding and the confusion of national squabbles with religious ecclesiastical viewpoints. On the contrary, authorities like Loofs and Beth note such evidences of tolerance as: the recognition of mixed marriages; no proselytizing propaganda among the believers of other Christian churches; Church prayers and memorial services for deceased non-orthodox Christians."[1]

The next theory that I would put forward is one which is held by a certain number of members of the Church of England. The true Church, they say, consists of all those religious bodies that have bishops and the Apostolic succession. Outside that sphere it is not really the Church in any serious use of the word.

[1] Prayers were said in many orthodox churches for the repose of the soul of the late Cardinal Mercier. Translator's note. *The Eastern Orthodox Church*, by Stefan Zankov, pp. 78-83. (S.C.M.). I have attended Requiem services for Anglicans in the Orthodox Church.

Now the first difficulty about that theory is this. It takes one particular point in the Christian life and makes that, and that only, the sign of what is the Church. Can that really be justified. Let us take two bodies—The Church of Rome and the Church of Scotland. In the opinion of most people the Church of Rome departs very seriously indeed from the characteristics of the apostolic Church. In particular there is the Papacy. The Church of Scotland, it may be argued, also departs from the customs and usages of the primitive Church in the fact particularly that it has no Bishops. Now can we say that that defect is really a more important one than the many defects of the Church of Rome? I do not think we can. We cannot pick out one particular characteristic, which no doubt may be a very proper characteristic of the Church, and say all religious bodies that have this are the Church, those that have not are not the Church.

Further, we must notice that this theory is held by only a small section of the Church of England and no one else. Neither the Church of Rome nor the Orthodox Church has been willing to allow those who have Bishops outside its own limits to be members of its Church; and when the Orthodox Church has adopted a more charitable theory it has not limited itself to episcopally ordered churches. A large section of the Church of England does

not hold this opinion. It is not in the Articles or formulas of our Church. It is in fact a private view held by a certain number of English theologians.

Moreover, it no more harmonizes with the real characteristics of the Christian world than do the first two theories—the opinions of the Roman and the Orthodox Church. Any theory which considers that the many millions of Christians, perhaps one hundred million, who have not episcopal orders are not truly members of Christ's Church must be condemned as not corresponding with the facts. We are irritated by the claim which the Church of Rome makes in saying that we are not members of Christ's Church, when we know quite well that we are. Are we not acting in exactly the same way as the Church of Rome when we say that the Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Congregational Churches, which contain many real disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, are outside the Church and that their members are to be left to the uncovenanted mercies of God? That is one of those things which most people will find it impossible to hold to be true. It is one of those narrow opinions which often have a most harmful effect by making people feel that if the Christian Church is so narrow they cannot believe in it. If it hurts and irritates us when the Church of Rome says we are not part of the true Church, does it not equally hurt the Scottish Presbyterians if we say they are

not members of the true Church; and is it not a ridiculous thing to hold a theory which says that a Church, which is amongst the first in vigour and intellectual life and what it has accomplished for the work of Christ, is really not part of the Church? I do not think that this theory is possible.

Still we have a difficult problem before us. We have stated that we believe in one Church. It is difficult to say that that belief is true. There are apparently a great many churches. In order to meet this difficulty great stress is laid in certain parts of Christendom on the belief in the invisible church. In the early days of the Church, the invisible church meant not Christians on earth who belonged to the society of Jesus Christ but those who had departed. The Church was divided into the visible and invisible — the visible church of earth, the invisible church of saints who had accomplished their warfare. The church on earth the Church militant, the church in heaven the Church triumphant. This was undoubtedly the normal belief. But we find in St Augustine, who was much troubled about the position of those who had separated from the Catholic Church in Africa in his day, a good deal of teaching which suggests a somewhat different standpoint. There were many, he said, that were without who really should be considered within, and many within who should be considered to be without. The problem could be

put in this way. Here you have in the visible Church of Christ people who are living immoral lives. Are they within the Church or are they without? Here you have amongst the heretics good and pious and earnest people, true followers of Jesus Christ. Are they within the Church or are they without? Although I do not think that St Augustine ever modified his theory, yet he felt the difficulties of it.

Now speculations such as these have prevailed widely since the Reformation. Since the Reformation people have been puzzled when asked the question: Where is the one Church? Clearly there are a great many separated bodies, and the answer that they have given is that the one Church is the church invisible of all those on earth who are true servants of God. Who they are God only knows. There is a visible church, or rather there are many visible churches — associations of Christian men who are joined together on the basis of common beliefs and customs, whose members are members of the Church; but these are not the real Church. The real Church is the whole communion of the sanctified on earth and in heaven, and it is of that invisible body that you can predicate all the things which are said about the Church in the New Testament. It is that Church which is one; it is that Church which is holy; that Church which is the bride of Jesus Christ. The associations of Christian men are only the Church in an inferior sense.

That seems to be a plausible theory, and it is one very useful to justify our religious divisions, but if we read our New Testament I think we shall be quite certain that that is not what its teaching means. It means that the followers of Jesus Christ ought to be united together in the unity of one external society, which is called the Church of Christ. That is taught us not only by the words of the New Testament but by the actions of the leaders of the Church in New Testament times. St Paul is the greatest exponent of the doctrine of the Church. He clearly believed in it as one single society. When there was a danger of schism, in the case of the difference of the Jewish and the Gentile Christians, he worked hard to preserve Christian unity, for he felt that his work would be a failure if he had built up a separated Church for the Gentiles. To St Paul the Church was one great society extending everywhere throughout the world, whose main characteristic was that of unity. "By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body!"

A modification of the doctrine of the invisible church is the Congregational theory in its original and pure form. The Congregationalist recognises only the body of Christians to which he himself belongs. The church or congregation is for him a society formed by believers coming freely together and forming their own church. There may be many others who are

doing this, but in each case the visible church for them, and the only church, is the local society to which they belong. Outside there are the great bodies of other Christians who are not members of one's own congregation. Whether they are good or bad Christians we do not know, God only knows, but it is out of them that the one Christian Church, the mystical body of Jesus Christ, is formed. God alone knows who are its members.

The above, I think, represent the main outlines of belief about the doctrine of the Church at the present time, and we must pass on to a more constructive and fuller study.

2

We now turn first to the teaching of the New Testament, and I think that a point that must strike anyone is how important an element in the teaching of the New Testament the Christian Church is. If one considers that the word "Ecclesia," although it had a history in Jewish literature, had to be adapted for this purpose, the easy and natural way in which it is used by St Paul is very striking. In fact if one studies the books of the New Testament and remembers the short period during which they had come into existence, the creation of the Christian phraseology is a remarkable fact. At any rate the Christian Church is not a subordinate point in the gospel message but one

of fundamental importance, and the reason of course is the reason I have given above—that the Christian Church was to be a society based upon fundamental principles of Christian morality, brotherhood and fellowship.

We turn now to the first important question that we have to ask. Was the foundation of the Christian Church part of our Lord's teaching? This is one of those questions the asking of which makes the ordinary Bible-reading Christian feel puzzled. Quite clearly our Lord said that He was founding the Church, quite clearly He refers to it. Is not that sufficient? But we have to do with those who would tell us that these words are not part of our Lord's teaching but have been put into His mouth as representing the thought of the age when the Gospel was written. All that of course is very precarious, but it creates a feeling of doubt. I would like to say this, however, that if we believe that there is something providential about the Holy Scripture, the very fact that the words appear as part of our Lord's teaching thereon ought to make us realize how vital this doctrine is.

But I think we may go further than this. What I should maintain is that in any case the development of the Christian Church was the inevitable result of the historical conditions under which Christianity was founded and of the most fundamental characteristics of our Lord's teaching. This was pointed out with

great force by Dr Hort in his work on *The Christian Ecclesia.* The Christian Church is built up on four great principles—discipleship, brotherhood, ministry and sacraments. All these are fundamental parts of our Lord's teaching and work. It must be remembered, too, that the teaching of Christianity took place within the fold of Judaism. The religion of Israel was the religion of a society, and what was happening at the time when our Lord taught was that this society was changing from a national basis, a basis which was both political and religious, to one purely religious. The political aims of Judaism were destroyed by the Roman rule. The organisation of the nation became the organisation for a Church. The habit of proselytism was breaking down the narrow limits of nationalism. If then we believe in the Providence which directed the growth of the Church, we can see that it must be an integral part of Christian teaching, for it was the means of carrying out everything that our Lord taught about the spread of His gospel message.

But personally I think we may go further than that. The word "Ecclesia" was used for the Christian Church quite early. St Paul tells us that before his conversion he persecuted the Church of God. That seems to mean that it was already known as "the Church" in opposition to the Jewish "Synagogue," and I cannot but think that that early and striking

use of the word would come most naturally from the fact that our Lord Himself had used it and had used it on such an impressive occasion as that which is recorded by St Matthew. I have no doubt myself, therefore, that we can correctly say that our Lord Himself founded the Christian Church as the refounding of the divine society which was the means of the revelation of God to mankind.

The word "Ecclesia" or Church is used in the New Testament in three different significations. First, it is used for the universal Church—the Church Catholic; secondly, it is used for the local Church—the representative of the Universal Church in any particular locality; thirdly, it is used for a congregation for worship. The word "Churches" in the plural is used for the collection of local churches. The use of the term "Church," which is common at the present time, for separate branches of the universal Church which are distinguished not by locality but by difference of doctrine or order, has no authority at all in the New Testament. The idea that churches should be separated and be called Anglican Church, or Wesleyan Church, or Congregational Church, would have been entirely abhorrent to Christians of the apostolic age, and the use of the term "the Churches" for all these separated societies is not, in any sense of the word, biblical. The phraseology of the "British Weekly" for example, with its "news

from the Churches," would represent nothing which was possible in the apostolic times. Of these usages it is probable that the term "the Church" as representing the one society is the oldest. We have quoted above the statement of St Paul that before his conversion he persecuted the Church of God. The term "the Church" is used of the Church which is in Jerusalem; it is used in St Stephen's speech of the Church of the old dispensation. It was as the Church spread that it became necessary to distinguish the local societies one from one another as the Church in a particular place. This at a rather later date is expanded as, for example, by St Ignatius into "The Church of God which sojourneth" in some particular place. Hence arises the usage "the Churches" of the many local societies. The term "the church" can also be used of a Christian assembly for worship, as distinguished from the synagogue, the Jewish assembly, though in the earlier period this distinction was not always made. The term "synagogue" is occasionally used of the Christian place of worship. There are some difficulties if we try to go back into the Aramaic and Hebrew expressions which the Greek word "Ecclesia" represents, but they do not, I think, touch the fundamental question.

This society, "the Church," is presented to us in the New Testament under two aspects. On the one side it is an organised visible

society with its officials or officers, which has certain functions to perform and certain characteristics of life and worship. It is clearly represented to us as one united body, and St Paul conceives it to be his duty to preserve this unity. On the other side it is a spiritual and mystical society. It is described as the Body of Christ—the Church is the Body, and Christ is the Head. It is the sphere in which the spiritual gifts which come from Christ are given to its members. It is the home of faith and love. Its members are bound together by their unity in Christ, by brotherly affection one to another, and by the spiritual gifts which come to them from above.

3

We must now attempt to adapt to the conditions of the present day the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of the Church, and as a guide, at any rate, I will take two reports which have recently been issued on the subject. The one is a report on "the nature of the Church" agreed on at a Joint Conference of Representatives of the Church of England and of the Free Churches, which was held at Lambeth in the years 1922 and 1923. The other is the report on "The nature of the Church" received by the Lausanne Conference in 1927.

The Joint Conference Report begins :—

"1. The foundation of the Church rests not upon the will or consent or beliefs of men, whether as individuals or as societies, but upon the creative will of God.

2. The Church is the Body of Christ, and its constitutive principle is Christ Himself, living in His members through His Spirit."

The Lausanne Conference tells us :—

"God who has given us the gospel for the salvation of the world has appointed His Church to witness by life and word to its redeeming power. The Church of the living God is constituted by His own will, not by the will or consent or beliefs of men whether as individuals or as societies, though He uses the will of men as His instrument. Of this Church, Jesus Christ is the Head, the Holy Spirit its continuing life.

"The Church as the communion of believers in Christ Jesus is, according to the New Testament, the people of the New Covenant ; the Body of Christ ; and the Temple of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone."

It is of importance that we should have this widespread agreement as to the nature of the Church. It is not, as has sometimes been held,

a mere association of Christians for purposes of efficiency, or convenience, or anything of that sort, but it is part of God's revelation to man. It rests upon the will of God. It is an essential element of Christianity.

Both alike tell us that in its essence the Church is one.

The Joint Conference says :—

> "As there is but one Christ, and one life in Him, so there is and can be but one Church!"

The Lausanne Conference says :—

> "As there is but one Christ, and one life in Him, and one Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, so there is and can be but one Church, holy, catholic and apostolic."

Again we have a remarkable agreement on the ideal unity of the Christian Church. Of course this is quite compatible with very varied theories as to its presentation in the world, but this fundamental unity represents an agreement on the spiritual side of things which will help much towards more united action.

We turn to the relation of the visible to the invisible church. On this the Joint Conference says :—

> "This one Church consists of all those who have been, or are being, redeemed by and in Christ, whether in this world or in the world beyond our sight, but it has its

expression in this world in a visible form. Yet the Church, as invisible and as visible, is, by virtue of its one life in Christ, one."

Here the Lausanne Conference was not able to come to any agreement. It points out that there is, as we have already seen, a great difference of opinion as to the nature of the church visible and the church invisible, their relation to each other, and the number of those who are included in each. I have already pointed out the quite fundamental difference there is on this subject of the visible and invisible church. The doctrine of the invisible church is one of the points on which Lutheranism lays most stress. The statement of the Joint Conference seems to imply that the invisible church is the church of the redeemed who have passed beyond the present world, and the church visible is the church in the world.

Then as to the purpose of the Church, the Joint Conference says:—

"This visible Church was instituted by Christ as a fellowship of men united with Him, and in Him with one another, to be His witness and His instrument in the spread of His kingdom on earth."

The Lausanne Conference says:—

"The Church is God's chosen instrument by which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, reconciles men to God through faith,

bringing their wills into subjection to His sovereignty, sanctifying them through the means of grace, and uniting them in love and service to be His witnesses and fellow-workers in the extension of His rule on earth until His kingdom come in glory."

Here again there is a fundamental difference. The Lausanne Conference does not venture definitely to say that the visible Church was instituted by Christ, but it recognises that the Church on earth is God's instrument for the spread of the Gospel. Both alike agree on the end and purpose for which it exists.

We now come to the characteristics of the Church upon earth, in which again there is a marked agreement

The Joint Conference says:—

"As a visible Church it must possess certain visible and recognisable marks whereby it can be seen and known by men. These have been, since the days of the Apostles at least, the following:—(*a*) The profession of faith in God as revealed and incarnate in Christ; (*b*) the observance of the two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself; (*c*) an ideal of the Christian life protected by a common discipline; (*d*) a ministry, representative of the Church, for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the maintenance of the unity and continuity of the Church's witness and work."

The Lausanne Conference says :—

"The Church on earth possesses certain characteristics whereby it can be known of men. These have been, since the days of the Apostles at least, the following :—

1. The possession and acknowledgment of the Word of God as given in Holy Scripture and interpreted by the Holy Spirit to the Church and to the individual.
2. The profession of faith in God as He is incarnate and revealed in Christ.
3. The acceptance of Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature.
4. The observance of the sacraments.
5. A ministry for the pastoral office, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments.
6. A fellowship in prayer, in worship, in all the means of grace, in the pursuit of holiness, and in the service of man."

I do not think that these two statements of the characteristics of the Church require dwelling on at any great length. Quite clearly they interpret accurately the teaching of the New Testament; quite clearly they present to us the Church as an organised body with its ministry, its sacraments, its common life, dis-

cipline, faith and worship—a living organic society in the world and working in the world.

On the question as to who are members of the Church, the answer of the Joint Conference is :—

> "Baptism is, by the ordinance of Christ and of His Apostles, the outward and visible sign of admission into membership of the Church."

At Lausanne there is no statement on this point. It was not felt that the Conference, as a whole, could state in any form that the Church was the society of those who are baptised and believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. It must be recognized that there are many who are not prepared to lay the same stress as we do on Baptism as the rite of entrance into the Church.

As regards the visible unity of the Church, the Joint Conference puts it as follows :—

> "The Church visible on earth ought to express and manifest to the world by its own visible unity the one life in Christ of the one body."

Unity is the duty and the ideal of the Church on earth. This is put even more strongly by the Lausanne Conference.

> "Whatever our views on these points, we are convinced that it is the will of Christ

that the one life of the one body should be manifest to the world. To commend the gospel to doubting, sinful and bewildered men, a united witness is necessary. We therefore urge most earnestly that all Christians, in fulfilment of our Saviour's prayer that His disciples may be one, reconsecrate themselves to God, that by the help of His Spirit the Body of Christ may be built up, its members united in faith and love, and existing obstacles to the manifestation of their unity in Christ may be removed; that the world may believe that the Father has sent Him.

"We join in the prayer that the time may be hastened when in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

There the Lausanne Conference stops, but the Joint Conference tries to work out in the following two sections the problem of the relation of the divisions of the Christian world at the present time to this ideal unity.

"The true relation of the Church and local churches is that which is described in the New Testament—namely, that the churches are the local representatives of the One Church. The actual situation brought about in the course of history in

which there are different and even rival denominational churches independent of each other and existing together in the same locality, whatever justification arising out of historical circumstances may be claimed for these temporary separations, cannot be regarded as in accordance with the purpose of Christ, and every endeavour ought to be made to restore the true position as set forth in the New Testament."

And further:—"The marks which ought to characterize the church visible on earth are possessed by these existing separate Churches and societies of Christian people in very varying degrees of completeness or defect. Hence, even though they be parts of the visible church, they cannot be considered as all alike giving equally adequate expression to the Lord's mind and purpose. Some, indeed, may be so defective that they cannot rightly be judged to be parts of that Church. But such judgments, though made in trust that they are in accordance with the divine mind, must be regarded as limited to the sphere of the visible Church as an ordered society here on earth. It would be presumption to claim that they have a like validity in the sphere of the whole Church as the One Body of the redeemed in Christ, for within that sphere judgment can only be given by the all-knowing mind and sovereign mercy of God."

I think that a study of these two documents will impress upon us the amount of real unity there is amongst Christians on a subject where division has existed. It is important that we turn our minds to the facts on which we agree, for they will almost by themselves form a sufficient basis of unity. It is quite true, I think, that there must be a certain agreement between Christians as to the nature of the Church before they can unite in one Church. But after all, even in the Church of England, there are considerable variations of opinion on this subject, and yet we are able to be united. The agreement which is chronicled in the Report we have studied, an agreement which was not brought about by a clever adjustment of differences but represents a real unity, could form a strong basis for union. It is an agreement on points which are fundamental and important.

4

I think we may now gather up the threads of our argument and come to some conclusion in these matters. Let us begin by saying that we believe the Church consists of all baptised Christians who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It may be that many of them are imperfect Christians: it may be that they are without the privileges which they ought to have as members of the Church: but as Christian believers they are members of the Church.

This is an important point in our attitude. We are not to go to others and say, We are the Church, you are outside the Church, we want you to come into the Church. If you do that sort of thing they will not listen to you, they know that what you say is not true, and an attitude such as that does a great deal to prevent Christian reunion.

So, in the same way, we cannot say that the society to which we belong is a branch of the Church and others are not. The Church is the whole body of believers and should be one society. It is not so. The Church, therefore, is rent asunder by schism, and each of these divisions is not a church but a schism. Very often, for the sake of being courteous, one speaks of the Wesleyan Church, or the Presbyterian Church, or the Anglican Church, or the Roman Church. All such language is really quite erroneous. These are not Churches but schisms. We ought to speak of the Anglican schism, the Roman schism, the Wesleyan schism, and so on. When we call ourselves by the names of different people or principles, however excellent, we are doing exactly what St Paul condemned at Corinth, when he spoke of those who said "I am of Cephas; I am of Paul; I am of Christ." We are separate divisions or schisms of the Body of Christ. Some may represent the ideal of a Christian church less imperfectly than others, but as we are disunited we are all imperfect, and our

right method of approach to others is not to go to them and say: "You must conform yourselves to our model," but "Let us come together and consider what is the truest and best way of building up the Christian Church." We must banish every form and every feeling of superiority.

On the other hand the Christian Church should be one organic unity. If we are to be guided by the action of our Lord, or by the action of the Apostles, it is not to be a collection of separate and disorganized units, it is not to be a loose federation. It is to be one organic society which may carry out the analogy of the Church, which is the Body of Christ; it is to have its ministry, its sacraments, its discipline, its church order, and we have to build that order up in the best way. As a guide to that best way we have the Scriptures and the historical development of Christianity, scripture and tradition, scripture and the authority of the Church.

The unity of the visible Church is then an ideal rather than an actual fact. It is something for which we are working and to which we are pressing, but yet there is a real unity, for the Church on its spiritual side consists of all those who are true believers, and therefore are individually united in Christ. They are one in their spiritual union with Him, and therefore in spite of the fact of outward divisions they can be united. The pious Protestant and

the sincere Catholic in the wars of the seventeenth century, fighting one another for what they believed to be the truth, giving up their lives in the cause, falling by one another's hands as enemies on the field of battle, may yet be one in their spiritual life in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER IV

THE SACRAMENTS

The subject of my lecture to-day is "The Doctrine of the Sacraments in relation to Christian Reunion." The interest and difficulty of the problem is this. If we turn to the New Testament we shall find that the sacraments were intended to be in a particular way a mark of Christian unity. Of baptism it is said:

> "For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one spirit."

And in the same way with regard to the Holy Communion:

> "The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread."

Unity was meant to be the note of the sacraments. Yet in the history of the Church and at the present time, the sacraments, at any rate the Holy Communion, have been more

associated with Christian divisions than almost any other part of the Christian message. That is the problem that we have before us.

In the Conferences on Reunion which have so far taken place, the importance of the sacraments has been fully recognised. The Lambeth Conference tells us:

> "We believe that the visible unity of the Church will be found to involve the whole-hearted acceptance of the divinely instituted sacraments of baptism and the Holy Communion, as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ."

In my lecture last week I pointed out how both the Joint Conference and the Lausanne Conference recognized that the observance of the two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself was a mark of the visible Church, and this opinion is expanded more fully by the Lausanne Conference:

> "We testify to the fact that the Christian world gives evidence of an increasing sense of the significance and value of sacraments, and would express our belief that this movement should be fostered and guided as a means of deepening the life and experience of the churches. In this connection we recognize that the sacraments have special reference to the corporate life and fellowship

of the Church and that the grace is conveyed by the Holy Spirit, taking of the things of Christ and applying them to the soul through faith.

"We agree that sacraments are of divine appointment and that the Church ought thankfully to observe them as divine gifts."

There is, then, this definite recognised place which the sacraments ought to occupy in relation to the corporate life of a united church, but I need not emphasize the fact how different that is to the actual situation.

1. There are differences of opinion between different religious bodies as to the meaning of the sacraments. They are defined in different ways, and not only that, but each Church has a tendency to attack with great vehemence the opinions held by other religious bodies. On the one side such a term as "Zwinglian" is used as a severe condemnation, on the other side "Romanism," while Anglo-Catholics are attacked as "magical and superstitious."

2. There are great varieties of practice with regard to the sacraments, especially concerning the ceremonial and method of administration.

3. There are many disputes as to what is described as the validity of sacraments. Those who lay great stress on the spiritual values which come through the sacraments accom-

pany such a belief by the statement that that is only true of the sacraments if they are administered in a certain way, or by a certain church, or by certain ministers. The Church of Rome would say that the sacraments administered in the Church of England are null and void. Some members of the Church of England would say that the sacraments administered by Presbyterians are null and void. Many Protestant bodies would accuse the sacraments of the Roman Church of being superstitious and corrupt, and would deny them any spiritual value at all.

4. This difference of opinion not only prevails between church and church but within different churches or religious societies. Within the Church of England there are great varieties of opinion, and a tendency on all sides to be intolerant of one another. Similar differences of opinion, though not accentuated to such a large extent, prevail amongst the Presbyterians and the evangelical free churches.

5. Then there are differences of opinion as to the number of the sacraments. While all churches, with the exception of the Quakers, who do not generally speak of themselves as a Church, appear to admit the two sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, the Church of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church number seven sacraments, adding confirma-

tion or chrism, ordination, penance, marriage and extreme unction.

These are some of the differences which exist at the present time.

I

Perhaps the first point we had better take is the question of the number of sacraments. This is, to a certain extent at any rate, a question of terminology. During the early days of the Church the term "sacrament" was used of many different rites and with a very loose connotation. Neither the Greek word "mysterion," nor the Latin word "sacramentum," are particularly appropriate terms. It is probable that the word "mysterion" was used of marriage, for example, because of the language in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the word "mysterion" refers to the relation of Christ to the Church and not to the marriage ceremony, but anyhow there was no fixed rule. It was not until after the period of the undivided Church that the seven sacraments were definitely fixed. In the West this appears to have been the work of Peter Lombard in the twelfth century, in the East the seven sacraments are mentioned first in the thirteenth century, but the Orthodox Church did not finally fix the number until the seventeenth century, and many eastern divines have used uncertain language on this point. At the present time, however, it has become customary to speak of it as the Church of the

seven councils and the seven sacraments, and the acceptance of these seven would be looked upon by most members of the Orthodox Church as essential to a Church.

The Church of England has, in its formal language, limited the term "sacrament" in two directions, (1) A sacrament must be ordained by Christ Himself, and (2) it must be generally necessary for salvation. It thus limits it to the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. But it uses the term "sacrament" in a less rigid sense to include some, at any rate, of the other seven sacraments. It accepts confirmation, ordination, absolution, marriage, and in the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI, unction. Sometimes it is customary to describe these as "sacramental ordinances." Most of them are commended, none are forbidden, and generally it would be recognized that a sacrament is an outward and visible sign through which divine grace is given, and that through all in different ways spiritual blessings come to those who receive them.

The various Protestant bodies would be inclined to take a less comprehensive view. They all accept ordination in some form, although there are some who consider that ordination is but the recognition of a grace already given and does not confer grace. Many accept confirmation, but some do not. Marriage is looked upon by all as a sacred ordinance, but the customs with regard to it vary. The sacra-

ment of absolution or penance is looked upon with suspicion as it is associated with the rule of compulsory confession, and Extreme Unction is practically non-existent.

On the other hand, the Orthodox Church appears to put the two sacraments, clearly instituted by our Lord, on a different level to the other sacraments. For example, the Patriarch Jeremiah in his reply to the Nonjurors (1718) says: "We hold likewise that the Holy Sacraments are seven in number; but two only exceed in necessity, and are such as no one can be saved without them. For, as for baptism, it is our Lord's saying that whosoever is not born again of Water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God. And of the Eucharist, He says: 'Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.'" I doubt if the Church of Rome makes formally any such distinction.

As a basis for reunion it is agreed that the use of the two sacraments of the Gospel, as we may call them, is looked upon as essential. I do not think that the Church of England could unite on any basis which forbade any of these sacraments. The particular question of confirmation will be treated later. In relation to the Eastern Church the following has been suggested as a basis of unity:

"Inasmuch as the number of the sacraments has never been authoritatively fixed either by tradition from the Apostles or any decision of an

Œcumenical Council, their number has been differently reckoned in the Church at different periods. It was not until the sixteenth century that the number was defined in the Roman Church, or until the seventeenth in the Eastern. We recognize that the two sacraments of baptism and the Holy Eucharist are pre-eminent above the rest. In the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England the title sacrament is only used of these two as (1) having an outward visible sign ordained by Christ Himself, and (2) as generally necessary for salvation. But we agree further that the title sacrament may be used of other rites and ceremonies in which there is an outward and visible sign, and an inward and spiritual grace, and in that sense it is rightly used of other institutions, such as ordination, penance, confirmation, marriage, and the anointing of the sick; and in relation to some of these sacraments, since the customs of the different Churches have varied and still vary, we agree that each Church have liberty to retain its own usages."

2

The next question that we have to ask is: What constitutes the validity of a sacrament, under what conditions are sacraments valid? On this point there are varied opinions. The Church of Rome would say that sacraments

outside her fold, with the exception of some of those of the Orthodox Church, are not valid. There is, of course, one exception, as regards Baptism. It is held that baptism is valid by whomsoever performed, if there is clear evidence of intention to do what the Church does. The Church of Rome evades this question by saying that there is never adequate evidence of the right intention on the part of the baptiser outside the Roman Church, and therefore it baptises conditionally all those that it admits into its membership. As regards other sacraments, Holy Communion, ordination, penance, and so on, it entirely denies the efficacy or value of the sacraments of the Church of England. The Orthodox Church formerly held the same belief, and rebaptised any from other bodies who came into its membership, including members of the Roman Catholic Church. As the extract which I read the other day from Professor Zankov shows, its opinions and practices are now changing. In the Church of England opinion is divided. One section, those who call themselves Anglo-Catholics, believe that no sacraments or orders are valid unless administered by clergy who have the apostolic succession. That has never been the official teaching of the Church of England, nor has it been ever generally held among us. After the Reformation, while the Church was always quite definite in its acceptance of episcopacy and of the rightness of episcopal

orders, it did not consider the orders conferred by Presbyterians necessarily invalid. That was the opinion, for example, of Bishop Andrewes; and we find many members of the Church of England quite ready to communicate with foreign protestant Churches, for example, Bishop Cosin during the period of his exile in Paris. The Church of England recognises any baptism which is conferred with the Trinitarian formula by whomsoever administered, but in doubtful cases it baptises conditionally. The majority of the members of the Church of England would not deny the spiritual efficacy of non-conformist sacraments, but would not take part in them because we are at present separated, and therefore there would be an element of unreality in such a communion.

I would now ask you to turn to the teaching of St Augustine on this subject. The original opinion of the Church of Africa as held, for example, by St Cyprian was that no sacraments conferred outside the Church were valid. It was therefore the custom to rebaptise those who had been baptised by the Donatists or other schismatics. From this view St Augustine dissented. He did not feel able to maintain the old rigid view. How then did he escape from that position? He maintained that in the case of a sacrament it is our Lord Himself who performs the sacrament. He quotes, or misquotes, with this meaning the words "This is He that baptiseth," and holds therefore that as the person

is baptised by our Lord he has received the grace of baptism, though he would add that he could not make use of it until he becomes a member of the Church. It is not therefore necessary to baptise him. And he would think in a similar way about other sacraments such as that of ordination.

Now to deal with this question fully, we must ask what is meant by validity. The term "validity" is one which it is quite customary to use in speaking about sacraments, but I suppose very few people know exactly what they mean by it. Do we mean by "invalid" uncanonical, that is, not conferred according to the rules of our Church, or do we mean by "invalid" without spiritual efficacy? Dr. Williams tells us that "The concept of 'validity', in relation to sacramental actions, is a somewhat subtle and elusive one: it means more than 'regularity', and not so much as '*de facto* spiritual efficaciousness'. Its use may possibly be traced to the Greek *βέβαιος* in Ignatius' well-known dictum: 'Let that be held to be a valid eucharist which is under the Bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it.' 'Validity' means '*a priori* reliability'. A 'valid' celebration of the Eucharist is one which we can approach with confidence that all outward conditions necessary to constitute the rite have been fulfilled. One of these outward conditions is the provision of a minister with authority to officiate." Now if

"validity" means the same thing as "regularity" or "canonicity", then it is quite legitimate for us to hold that sacraments are not valid unless they are conferred by those who have episcopal orders. That is clearly the rule of our Church. We consider no one a proper minister of the sacraments unless he has received episcopal ordination or consecration, and in making that the condition we are following what has been the customary rule of the Church at least from the third century onwards. I do not think there can be any one who would quarrel with us for holding that. We hold also that the ultimate result of any reunion must be that all sacraments are so performed.

But if, on the other hand, we give any meaning of spiritual efficacy to the term 'validity' in relation to the sacraments, then our decision may be and should be something different. If indeed we held, as the Church of Rome professes to hold, that ordination gives a man a character by which he can produce the body and blood of Christ, then validity would imply spiritual power. The priest, it is held, in virtue of some power that he possesses, performs the sacrament. If the celebrant has not that power the sacrament is of no value. But we believe that all sacraments are really performed by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is He who baptises; He who gives us in the Eucharist the spiritual food of His body and blood; He who gives the Holy Ghost to those who are

ordained in the Christian Church. If this be so, can we really believe that our Lord Jesus Christ would refuse to give His grace and blessing because of some such defect as the absence of episcopal consecration? We can quite well believe that if a man, who has the spirit of self-will and self-assertion, has separated himself from the Church to which he belonged and started in an uncharitable way a separate society of his own, there might be little spiritual or moral value in any sacrament he celebrates. But schisms have seldom happened in that sort of way, and existing schisms are the inheritance of past differences. Can we really believe that if a presbyterian minister desires to fulfil our Lord's command by celebrating the Eucharist, whatever defect there may be in the way in which he may do so from an Anglican point of view, our Lord would refuse any blessing to him in that sacrament? I am sure that we cannot think so.

Nor, again, can we really believe that there will be a spiritual efficacy of a different sort from that which is in the Church of Rome or the Church of England. The spiritual value of the sacrament does not depend upon the definition that we have of it. In the Church of England some people are receptionists, some believe in the doctrine of the real presence, some have a belief which it is difficult to distinguish from transubstantiation.

Do we really believe that the grace these people receive in the sacraments is different in accordance with their different opinions? None of those things are really conceivable. I do not therefore think that it is possible for us to say that the sacraments of nonconformists are invalid in any real sense of the term. We can quite well say they are uncanonical; we can quite well say they are irregular; we can quite well say they are invalid, if invalid means the same thing as irregular, that is, not performed in accordance with what we believe to be the right way. All these things are quite possible and for us true, but I do not think that we can say that they are not sacraments for those who sincerely believe in them, because it would be entirely inconsistent with everything we know of God's method of dealing in the world with mankind. We can, I think, rightly refuse to participate in these sacraments as long as we are disunited, because there would be an unreality in professing a brotherhood we do not really feel, but we should not say that they are invalid. Nor, if the separation came to an end, would we be right in saying that these sacraments were null and void, or that we should not share in them.

I think that the following extract will enable us to be quite clear as to the two views of validity. It comes from Dr Hall's book on *Christian Reunion in Ecumenical Light*, a work

just published. With a view of reasserting the Anglo-Catholic position he writes :

"The point is that in Catholic use 'valid,' while normally presupposing 'canonical' or 'regular,' means more. *It means that the sacrament or ministry concerned has been performed or conferred in conformity with the primitive arrangements of Christ and His Spirit for the Church.* To the Church, according to Catholic belief, pertains the authority to define what such conformity requires. But even the universal Church cannot deviate from the original divine arrangement. It cannot truly declare valid any sacrament or ministry in which the conformity mentioned is lacking.

"The real issue, then, is clear. When Catholics deny the validity of non-episcopal ministries or sacraments they mean simply that they do not conform in all essentials to the arrangements of Christ and His Holy Spirit for the Church, and that apart from episcopal ordination in line with 'apostolic succession' such ministries cannot be made valid. Mere recognition would leave this essential of validity unsupplied. Protestants, on the other hand, deny that episcopacy, and what is called 'apostolic succession' by means of episcopacy, are of divine appointment."

Here, then, the issue is clear. According to Dr Hall, episcopacy and apostolic succession

are of divine appointment. On what evidence does he assert this? There is no command of our Lord, no apostolic custom, which would justify him. Historical research has made it perfectly clear that episcopacy was the result of certain lines of development in the Church. We cannot demand for the validity of a sacrament anything which is not clearly and distinctly to be deduced from the New Testament. This demand for things for which we have no command as an essential for sacraments is inconsistent with the teaching of the Church of England. All that we can say is essential for a sacrament is, there should be a real desire to do what our Lord Himself did, and that we should obey His commands. In baptism, the washing in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; in the Holy Communion, the blessing of the bread and wine with full use of the words of institution, the reverent giving and receiving of them. That is all that can be proved from Scriptures to be essential for these sacraments. In the case of ordination, it is the laying on of hands with prayer, as Duchesne pointed out. In all cases it is right that the Church, which is the guardian of the sacraments, should make its rules and regulations, that it should appoint its proper officers to celebrate them, and that it should guard them with care. Agreement in accepting the rules of the Church may be a right basis for reunion, but we cannot say that

the validity, in any other sense except its canonical signification, depends upon anything which cannot be deduced from the New Testament.

A study of the development of the Christian ministry in the second and third centuries makes clear the importance of Church order. Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch were the great champions of order, and to them as much as to any other men the Church owes its traditional organization. The fact of the wide circulation and the preservation of these letters is a significant fact. On the one side was the spiritual anarchy of the prophetic ministry, on the other the undeveloped local ministry. By strengthening the local ministry and by making the sacraments the basis of order, a strong, united ordered Church was built up. It is just that which we need at the present day. We want a strong, well-ordered united Church, which may be the home of Christian liberty. To secure that we should follow in the steps of the Church of the second and third centuries which created this strong and elastic Church order. But the Church then did not deny the spiritual validity of the existing ministries, nor should we.

3

The next point that we come to is the question of eucharistic belief. The churches

are divided, or appear to be divided, more on their definitions of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist than on any other subject, and at the present time differences of opinion on this point cause a larger amount of controversy and friction than those on almost any other subject. It is, in appearance at any rate, the most thorny question we have to discuss, yet there is a very considerable body of common belief. The following is the statement which was made at Lausanne :—

"We believe that in the Holy Communion our Lord is present, that we have fellowship with God our Father in Jesus Christ His Son, our living Lord, who is our one Bread, given for the life of the world, sustaining the life of all His people, and that we are in fellowship with all others who are united to Him. We agree that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the Church's most sacred act of worship in which the Lord's atoning death is commemorated and proclaimed, and that it is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and an act of solemn self-oblation.

"There are among us divergent views, especially as to (1) the mode and manner of the presence of our Lord ; (2) the conception of the commemoration and the sacrifice ; (3) the relation of the elements to the grace conveyed ; and (4) the relation between the minister of this sacrament and the validity

and efficacy of the rite. We are aware that the reality of the divine presence and gift in this sacrament cannot be adequately apprehended by human thought or expressed in human language."

This statement, which shows considerable agreement, is accompanied by the statement already quoted, that amongst Christians there is an increasing sense of the value of sacraments. This increasing sense of the value of sacraments, and in particular of the corporate value of the service of the Holy Communion, would make an agreement, if it were possible, of the greatest value to the Church.

Now it is clear, in the first place, that to get people to unite together on a common definition of the presence of Christ in the sacraments would be a matter almost impossible. I am going to suggest also that it is not necessary; in fact, that the effect of definition has been to decrease the respect for the sacraments and not to increase it.

Let me take, first of all, one striking fact. Up till the time of the Lateran Council in 1215, there was no defined belief as to the nature of the sacrament. There was a common body of doctrine, there were the opinions of theologians, there was the language of the liturgies, which, being language of devotion, was capable of interpretation in many different ways, but there was no official ecclesiastical definition,

and yet during all that period there was the deepest reverence for the sacraments. Difficulties became acute with the definition of transubstantiation accepted by the Fourth Lateran Council. From that time onwards we begin to get far more serious dissensions than there had been before. We get the dissensions between the Nominalists and the Realists, we get the Wycliffite controversy in this country, and then we get the Reformation, which in one of its aspects was largely a reaction against the medieval definition. The Reformation created a far more difficult situation, for it produced many different definitions of the Eucharist both positive and negative, and many of the churches were as anxious to say what they did not believe as what they did believe.

Secondly, let me take the Church of England. In the Church of England it is admitted that there is very wide variety of eucharistic belief, or there is thought to be. Yet, in spite of this variety of belief, we can come together and do unite in the Holy Communion. If you were to cast your eyes on a large congregation at the Holy Communion service in any English Church, and if you were able to get some knowledge of the thoughts, ideas and aspirations in which they took part in the service, you would find great variety of belief, but all alike can receive edification and spiritual benefit from the service. The fact is that the spiritual value of the Eucharist does not depend upon

our beliefs but upon the gift of Christ, and because it is Christ's gift we can receive what is needful for our own spiritual life.

Then, thirdly, I would ask you to consider this. All these definitions, when they go beyond the simple statement of the words of Scripture, may satisfy our logical sense but do not convey any real meaning. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to us: "This is my body; this is my blood." He gives us in the Eucharist the spiritual food of His body and blood, that is, His life. If He does that it is something which happens entirely within the region of spiritual things, and we have no knowledge or power of understanding what can be the relation of those spiritual gifts to the material form through which the gift is given.

The most elaborate and perhaps the most scientific attempt at definition is that of the Church of Rome in the doctrine of transubstantiation. Undoubtedly this term has been and can be interpreted in a materialistic sense, and there are many who think of it in that way. The miracle of Bolsena would be an apt illustration. But that is not the proper meaning of the term; it is one which an instructed theologian would repudiate. The change of substance is not a change of anything that is material but a change of the essence or reality. To a realist philosopher the expression would have a real meaning, to one who is not a realist it can have no mean-

ing at all, except that the meaning is changed. The consecrated bread and wine mean for us the body and blood of Christ. That is the only change that can take place unless, as I say, you hold a system of philosophy which is hardly tenable at the present day, and is not held by the great majority of thinking people. Really, from that point of view, transubstantiation does not mean much more than a Zwinglian would hold. The other definitions which have been proposed, the real presence, the receptionist doctrine, the virtualist doctrine, and so on, do not, when they come to be analysed, really mean anything much at all. They are forms of words.

Now I venture to say that the only basis of Christian reunion and the right method for all of us is to go back to the tradition of Christianity before the Lateran Council. We do not need, and are better without, any definition at all as a basis of union or reunion. There is no need for us to define our doctrine. For the devout Christian it is sufficient that he takes the words of our Lord as reported to us in the gospel. That is quite sufficient and gives everything which any one needs or desires. It is sufficient for us that our Lord said "This is my body; this is my blood," and that therefore we believe that in and through the Holy Communion He gives us the spiritual gifts of His body and blood. And I would go further and say that with this perfect freedom the Holy Communion

comes to have a far greater meaning. I believe that the varied theology of the Church of England gives to our eucharistic belief and teaching a far greater richness of spiritual meaning than you would find at the present time in the Roman Catholic Church, where the aspects and meanings of the Eucharist are stereotyped by the limitations of doctrinal definition.

4

There remains one more subject which I should like to treat with a little fullness, and that is the position of confirmation. Confirmation is a sacrament or an ordinance, whichever we wish to call it, about which there is great variety of custom in the Christian Church.

In the first place there is no tradition as to the proper form of the sacrament. The words to be used are not given in any place in the New Testament. Then there is no agreement in the Church as to the matter. In the Church of England it is the laying on of hands; in the Roman and Eastern Churches it is anointing with the chrism. Then there is no agreement as to the minister of confirmation. In the Eastern Church the minister is a priest, who makes use of the chrism which has been blessed by a bishop. In the Roman Church the minister is normally a bishop, but a priest can confirm if he has authority given to him for the purpose. The Lutheran and Scandin-

avian Churches, which lay great stress on confirmation, even when episcopal, hold that a presbyter is a sufficient minister of confirmation.

Then, again, there are two quite distinct customs as to the time of confirmation. In the Eastern Church the administering of the chrism takes place at the time of Baptism. In the Western Church it is always postponed, and the time of confirmation varies from somewhere about eight years old to a time which is normally fourteen or fifteen.

Then, again, there has been great difference of opinion as to the necessity of confirmation. So much was this the case in the middle ages that St Thomas Aquinas holds that it is not necessary, though it is desirable that any one who is to be ordained should have first been confirmed. This was altered by the Church of Rome at the Council of Trent. The Eastern Church by connecting it with baptism makes it an obligation for every one; and the Church of England has a rule making confirmation necessary before Holy Communion. But that is not the rule or the custom of the Church of Rome, which admits to communion those who are not confirmed.

Now I want you to consider what this variety means. It means that our customs about confirmation, which I am bound to say I think are admirable and better than those of any other religious body, are purely insular in their char-

acter. They are Anglican customs. It does not seem to me, therefore, that we have any grounds for demanding any particular custom or usage as regards confirmation as a necessary condition of reunion. I would go further and say that with this great amount of variety we should not have the practice of confirmation laid down as a condition of reunion. This is one of the cases where there seems to be a great tendency to confuse Anglican and Catholic custom. I believe myself that our traditional teaching and custom with regard to confirmation are of the greatest value. I should like to see it prevail in all churches with which we are in communion and throughout the Christian world. I think it is far better than the Greek, the Roman, or the Lutheran custom. But that gives me no ground at all for insisting on anything in connection with it, and I am sure that in any scheme of reunion to make this a *sine qua non* would simply defeat the object we have before us. It would immediately create in some quarters a spiritual opposition to Confirmation. Leave it free and the merits of the custom and its biblical basis are so strong that I do not doubt it would prevail universally.

5

I have tried in this lecture to review some of the points of difference between the churches with regard to the sacraments. I would like to

conclude with some more general observations on the theology of sacraments.

The first point is this. We should, I believe, look upon sacraments as rites which we have to perform and not as something about which it is necessary to hold a particular belief. Our Lord's words were: "Go ye into all the world and teach the gospel, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He did not bid us have any definition with regard to baptism. It is sufficient that we fulfil His command. Our Lord's words were: "This do ye in remembrance of me." He did not bid us hold a particular belief or definition. He gave to His Church the power of binding and of loosing. We follow the example of the gospel in the laying-on of hands, whether in confirmation or in ordination; we marry people with the blessing of the Church. In all these cases what is necessary for the corporate life of the Church is that we should fulfil our Lord's commands and act in accordance with the custom of the Church. It is on the basis of that that the spiritual value and meaning will grow up. They will vary in different times and in different places. At one time it is the individual aspect of the Holy Communion, at another it is the corporate aspect; at one time the memorial of the sacrifice will be the most prominent, at another the spiritual gifts which come through it. We don't want to limit or burden any of these

sacraments and ordinances by narrow rules or definitions. As corporate rites of the Christian Church they would fulfil their purpose if the Church cared for the celebrating of them in a right way.

The second point that I would speak of is the opposition which is often presented to us between what are alleged to be two types of Christianity.

There is the sacramental type, and, in contrast with that, there is the evangelical type. The one type would be represented in its most extreme form by the system of the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Eastern Church, and is sometimes called "Catholic Christianity." The other type would be represented in its most extreme form by the Quakers, who have no sacraments at all, and there is intermediate between the two very great variety of usage. The existence of this variety of usage and the existence of different points of view cannot be doubted. What I would like to suggest is that the antithesis of sacramental and evangelical, or catholic and evangelical, is not really a correct one. I believe that we might have a complete Catholic system of sacramental life in the Church without any violation of evangelical truth.

The matter turns on the proper theological solution of two questions. It may be convenient to put the first question in the

technical language of scholastic philosophy. Do sacraments work *ex opere operato?* To try and explain. The two points of view are these: The one point of view says the sacraments are such that they are independent of the faith of the recipient, the other point of view would say that the sacraments depend on the faith of the recipient. Now really there are two things. There is, I believe, in all sacraments a definite gift which comes from Christ Himself. If that be so, the reality of the gift is quite independent of the recipient. It is something real. It is not anything merely psychological, it is not anything which vanishes because of our failure. But on the other hand, the value of that gift to us must depend upon the faith with which we receive it. On the one side the gift is a real one, on the other side it is for us ineffective unless we receive it in the right spirit. The sacraments are not merely something subjective without an objective reality. On the other hand, there is nothing mechanical or magical in their working. They represent God's grace given to us, and their effect upon us depends upon our being willing to receive that grace in the right spirit. There is a real gift and a real grace, and there is nothing mechanical in the working of the sacraments.

The second question is, on what does the grace of a sacrament depend? and we might put the contrast as one between *potestas* or

power and prayer. According to the scholastic theology, the validity of a sacrament depends upon a certain power which is conferred upon the priest. Thus Cardinal Vaughan once stated that in ordination a priest has the power given him of producing the body and blood of Christ. The other view is that the spiritual value of the sacrament is the gift of Christ given in answer to the prayers of the Church. There are two things we have to remember. It is Christ who is the minister of every sacrament, and whatever gift there is comes from Him, and He gives us that gift not because of any power of the priest to produce anything, but in answer to the prayers which the Church offers up through its appointed earthly minister.[1] If once that view of sacraments and sacramental grace is grasped, it takes away any grounds for the accusation that there is something magical or superstitious in the sacraments. The basis of our belief in sacraments is mystical, in the wholesome sense of that word. We believe that behind the material phenomena of life there is an all-pervading spiritual power which represents God as working in the world. In and through

[1] It may be noted as of great significance that for over 1000 years the only form of absolution in the service for the reconciliation of penitents was a prayer. The declaratory form of absolution which has become customary, particularly in the Western Church, is not the original form. A study, for example, of the service for the reconciliation of penitents of the Gelasian Sacramentary will show that the service consisted of a prayer for the forgiveness of those who are penitent.

the sacraments we are brought into spiritual union with our Lord Jesus Christ. The gift is spiritual, and we can receive it because we too are spiritual, and it does not depend upon any power which any one can exercise.

If, then, we are prepared to believe that while there is a real gift in a sacrament it is made effective through the faith with which we receive it, and if we believe that that gift comes to us not through the power of the priest but by the gift of Christ, in answer to the prayers of the Church, we take away the antithesis which has been created between catholic and evangelical.

The sacramental system of the Church is based upon the words of the Gospel, and our belief in the real presence of Christ in His Church, and harmonizes with the religious needs of human life. An unwholesome doctrine of the sacraments may easily become, what it is accused of being, something superstitious and magical. A wholesome doctrine of the sacraments is the strongest support of evangelical religion. The system of the Catholic Church, which has developed the sacramental system in a way adapted to the whole of human life is one in itself wholesome and evangelical. The sacrament of baptism at the beginning of life; confirmation, the strengthening by God's Spirit of the boy or girl at the beginning of their responsible life; marriage, the sanctification of the highest human fellowship, and the

most fundamental need for the preservation of human life; the Holy Communion, on the one side, the spiritual life of the Church, on the other the great corporate act of worship, the service of Christian brotherhood; Penance and absolution for the restoration of the penitent; all these are a natural part of the life of a Christian Church.

If we look forward at any time in the future to complete reunion of Christendom, it is obvious that it must include the sacramental system of the Church, but nothing that evangelical piety has taught us need be lost to such a Church, if we have what I believe to be a sound theology of the sacraments.

CHAPTER V

THE MINISTRY

We come now to what is the most difficult part of our whole problem—the question of the Christian ministry.

You will remember that when we were discussing the nature of the Church we noted that it was agreed that one of the characteristics of the Church on earth was a ministry for the pastoral office, the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. At Lausanne it was agreed that—

(1) The ministry is a gift of God through Christ to His Church and is essential to the being and well-being of the Church.

(2) The ministry is perpetually authorised and made effective through Christ and His Spirit.

(3) The purpose of the ministry is to impart to men the saving and sanctifying benefits of Christ through pastoral service, the preaching of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments, to be made effective by faith.

(4) The ministry is entrusted with the government and discipline of the Church, in whole or in part.

(5) Men gifted for the work of the ministry, called by the Spirit and accepted by the Church are commissioned through an act of ordination by prayer and the laying on of hands to exercise the function of this ministry.

And then finally, the Lausanne Conference threw out the following suggestion :—

"In view of (1) the place which the episcopate, the councils of presbyters, and the congregation of the faithful, respectively, had in the constitution of the early Church ; and (2) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems of government are each to-day, and have been for centuries, accepted by great communions in Christendom ; and (3) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems are each believed by many to be essential to the good order of the Church, we therefore recognise that these several elements must all, under conditions which require further study, have an appropriate place in the order of life of a reunited Church, and that each separate communion, recalling the abundant blessing of God vouchsafed to its ministry in the past, should gladly bring to the common life of the united Church its own spiritual treasures."

But they qualified this statement by adding :—

"If the foregoing suggestion be accepted and acted upon, it is essential that the acceptance of any special form of ordination as the regular and orderly method of introduction into the ministry of the Church for the future, should not be interpreted to imply the acceptance of any particular theory of the origin, character, or function of any office in the Church, or to involve the acceptance of any adverse judgment on the validity of ordination in those branches of the Church universal that believe themselves to have retained valid and apostolic orders under other forms of ordination ; or as disowning or discrediting a past or present ministry of the word and sacrament which has been used and blessed by the Spirit of God."

The above extracts from the Lausanne Report represent the amount of theoretical agreement which has been attained on this matter, and it is the position there outlined that I propose to justify.

I

The first question which will no doubt be raised by some is, why should we trouble about the question of ministry or orders at all? Let each national Church, or each branch of the Church, have its own form of ministry, and let

them join together in some sort of federal union. We do not consider it necessary that every country should be governed in the same way, so it is not necessary, it is maintained, that every church should be governed in the same way. Some such suggestion as this has been put forward by representatives of the Lutheran Church, who are indifferent in this matter of orders. Some of their churches are episcopalian and some presbyterian in their government. It would represent again the point of view of the great body of American Protestant churches, who are also widely indifferent to any question of order.

Of course the answer to this question really depends upon what idea we have as to the Christian Church. If we believe in the Church as one organic society spread everywhere throughout the world, it seems to follow that there must be some unity in its ministry. It is quite true that the nations of the world have different forms of government, but they are not united together in the sort of organic society which we desire the Christian Church should be. Moreover, it is found by experience that these differences of ministries are really a fruitful cause of disunion, for the churches will not accept the authority of one another's ministries, and a fundamental condition of Christian unity must be that every minister is accepted everywhere throughout the Christian world. It is necessary, therefore, to attain such a real unity,

and it is probable also that there is no stronger guarantee of real unity than a unity in ministry; it turns a mere assemblage of diverse units into a real organic society. I do not believe that this proposal to dispense with the united ministry is one which can be justified either theoretically or practically.

2

I purpose now, first of all, to examine the two fundamental historical questions which underlie any theory of the ministry.

The first is: What is the witness of the apostolic Church as to the form of the Christian ministry, and in particular, what can we say about the origin of episcopacy?

Some years ago, in my book on *The Christian Ministry*, I argued that there was no authoritative evidence to be obtained from the Bible or the apostolic Church as to the form of the Christian ministry. This is what I said:—

"And first I would put this deduction. It is a negative one. It seems to me clear that not one of the rival systems of Church polity which prevail at the present day can find any direct support in the New Testament. Let us take episcopacy. There are no definite biblical arguments in favour of it. The name we have, but its signification is different. Attempts have been made to find arguments in favour of it, in the position of James the Lord's brother,

the Angels of the Churches in the Revelation, the language of the Pastoral Epistles. A more careful exegesis will show us that these arguments are based upon misinterpretation. There is no biblical authority for episcopacy.

"But that is equally true of presbyterianism. It is quite true that there are presbyters in the New Testament, but the government of the Church is not presbyterian. The presbyters are local officials, not of great importance, who had no wide influence and were inferior, perhaps even in a sense subordinate, not only to the Apostles, but to many others—Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets—who were the ministers of the universal Church.

"It is claimed with some insistence by certain writers that the early Church was congregational. I must own that so far as I understand congregationalism such a theory seems to me baseless. It is true that each local church (which probably from the beginning would consist of several congregations) had an independent life of its own, but it derived that life and authority from the universal Church. From that comes to it its teaching, its ministry, its rules of life and faith. There is no trace of evidence for the idea that the whole had been built up from the contemplation or amalgamation of separate units. The local church, although it had a congregational element, was not congregational. It was not the unit out of which the Church was built, but the local

representatative of the one Church, which was prior both in life and idea as an organised society.

"Nor, lastly, is there any support for romanism. It is true that for a time St Peter takes the lead in the primitive Church, but he is only first in order of precedency, and is subject to the authority of the Apostles generally and of the Church, and at a later date any position of prominence is held by St James."

It is interesting to note that Canon Streeter has arrived at much the same conclusions, though he puts them in a somewhat different way. His conclusion is that all theories of the ministry can support themselves on the authority of the Apostolic Church. "For four hundred years," he writes, "theologians of rival Churches have armed themselves to battle on the question of the primitive Church. However great their reverence for scientific truth and historic fact, they have at least *hoped* that the result of their investigations would be to vindicate Apostolic authority for the type of Church order to which they were themselves attached. They have all alike," he says, "gone on the uncriticised assumption, made by all parties to the controversy, that in the first century there existed a single type of Church order." Then he continues: "Approach the evidence without making that assumption and two conclusions come into sight: (1) in the New Testament itself there can be traced an

evolution in Church order, and (2) the most natural interpretation of the other evidence is that, at the end of the first century A.D., there existed in different provinces of the Roman Empire, different systems of Church government. Among these, the episcopalian, the presbyterian, and the independent can each discover the prototype of the system to which he himself adheres.

"The hypothesis of a primitive diversity in Christian institutions may, or may not, succeed in commending itself to the judgment of scholars; but in the meantime it has, at any rate, one merit: it is not likely to add fuel to the flames of ecclesiastical controversy. Indeed, if my hypothesis is correct, then, in the classic words of *Alice in Wonderland*, 'Everyone has won, and all shall have prizes.'"

In support of our main contention that we cannot quote Apostolic authority for episcopalian or any type of ministry, we may add the testimony of Dr Williams, who approaches the subject from a different point of view to Dr Streeter. He says of the ministry: "Our Lord planted the Apostolic ministry in the Church, like a piece of living and growing plasm, originally simple in nature, but capable of adapting, organising, and differentiating itself so as to correspond to the needs of the Church which it was meant to serve. It might, in theory, have remained one and simple, or have explicated itself into two, three, seven, or

any other number of ranks or gradations without disobeying any explicit dominical command. In fact, however, during the first hundred and fifty years after the Ascension, it gradually and, as it were, unconsciously elaborated itself under the pressure of circumstances and of its own inherent vitality into the threefold ministry of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons as known to subsequent centuries."

Dr Williams is like myself a great champion of episcopacy but, equally with Dr Streeter and myself, he does not support it on any command of our Lord, or any apostolic precept, but looks upon it as the result of one hundred and fifty years of growth. I think that we may, with these witnesses in our favour, take that as an accepted result of historical criticism.

3

The second historical question which demands investigation is that of the Apostolic succession. The doctrine of Apostolic succession, as it has normally been taught in recent times, is as follows: Every bishop has been consecrated by three bishops before him, and the succession can be traced right back to Apostolic times. Through the laying on of hands by bishops, the Holy Ghost is given to the bishop consecrated, and through him to the whole Church. The Holy Spirit or the grace of orders has been handed down in this

way from the times of the Apostles. It is argued that all those who have this Apostolic succession have a valid ministry and sacraments, and of all those who are without the succession both the ministry and the sacraments are invalid.

Now I have elsewhere described this doctrine as mechanical. Exception has been taken to that epithet. It has been alleged that this doctrine of Apostolic succession is no more mechanical than any other sacramental teaching. If we agree that the body and blood of our Lord are given through the medium of bread and wine because they have been consecrated by a priest, the further question whether that priest has or has not the Apostolic succession does not make the action any more or less mechanical. I have already explained why it is that there is nothing mechanical about sacraments, if our theology be a sound one, for sacraments are dependent upon the prayers of the Church and the gift of Christ, and there is nothing mechanical about either of these. The reason why I maintain that the doctrine of Apostolic succession in the form stated above is mechanical is that it makes the validity of orders and sacraments depend upon the question whether the proper forms have taken place in a consecration perhaps many centuries ago.

Let us take an instance. Suppose the opinion of many Roman Catholic controversialists be correct and Archbishop Parker was not properly

consecrated in the reign of Queen Elizabeth through some defect, it means that the Church of England ever since then has been solemnly consecrating bishops and ordaining priests and celebrating sacraments, and all these have been meaningless rites. We have no orders and no sacraments.

Supposing, again, that the doctrine of Apostolic succession is true, and that there are no proper sacraments unless the minister of the sacraments is episcopally ordained. For the last four hundred years the presbyterian Church of Scotland has been solemnly ordaining its ministers, and solemnly celebrating the sacrament, it has been conspicuous for theological learning and evangelical zeal with missionary activity. Yet we are asked to believe that its ministers are only laymen and its sacraments are not sacraments at all. Perhaps the unreality would become more apparent still if we were to take the Swedish, the Norwegian, and the Danish Churches. The Swedish Church is believed to have Apostolic succession, the Norwegian and Danish Churches have not. Both alike ordain their ministers in the same way and consecrate their bishops. All three alike celebrate the sacrament in the same way. Are we really to think that the sacraments of the Swedish Church are different in character from those of the Norwegian or of the Danish Church? Even more conspicuous is the instance afforded by Finland. About sixty

years ago all the bishops in Finland died at the same time, and the Russian Government of the day would not allow any foreign bishop to consecrate the new bishops. Is it reasonable really to think that since that time the Church of Finland, which has appointed its clergy and celebrated its sacraments as it did before, has no sacraments at all?

It is these considerations which have made me say that the doctrine is unreal and mechanical; and, as a matter of fact, a great many other people are beginning to think that, and so they are modifying in various ways the doctrine of Apostolic succession. But the real fact is that the theory of succession which prevails at the present time does not represent the original teaching of the Christian Church. It has always been the custom to dwell upon the fact that the Apostolic succession dates from the second century. That is true, but not in the sense in which the term is used at the present day. When we turn to the records of the second century, we find that great stress is laid upon the succession, but it is a succession of a different sort. It is a succession by office and not by ordination. If we turn to Hegesippus, or Irenaeus, or Tertullian, we find that it is held that the bishops of the churches, especially the bishop of Rome, were the direct successors of the Apostles, in the same way that a King is the direct successor of the founder of his dynasty. That they

have inherited an office, and through this succession of bishops in the office, there has been handed down the Christian creed, the Christian sacraments, the Bible, and the whole system of Christian life and thought. The open succession of the Christian Church was contrasted with the secret succession of the Gnostics. It was the external guarantee of religious truth. The succession did not mean any transmission of grace, it meant the transmission of the apostolic tradition. It was not the succession that made a bishop, but a bishop was one who was duly appointed to his office and thereby received the succession.

This conception was the fundamental one with regard to Apostolic succession, and continued for some centuries. The following is Professor Turner's judgment :—

> "There is not, within the patristic period and even considerably later, any deviation from the common and traditional conception of the meaning of Apostolic succession, as we have seen it in vigor from the time of Hegesippus and Irenaeus onwards. The conception that in post-Reformation times has superseded it in the Western Church may possibly be justified as a logical result of asserting the validity of non-catholic orders, but it was at least a novel departure and must be frankly recognised that it depends on St Augustine's novel departure,

and was unknown in primitive times. Certainly the Augustinian view is often so phrased that it seems to lend colour to a mechanical conception of the sacraments, a danger from which the teaching of the earlier Fathers is wholly free." [1]

A further question arises as to what were the conditions of appointment or ordination of a bishop or a presbyter in the second and third centuries. At the Council of Nicæa it was laid down that every bishop should be ordained by three other bishops, and we find that custom existing in the third century, but so far as we can judge the necessity for episcopal consecration and ordination, and the rule of consecration by three bishops, only gradually grew up. The following are relevant facts :—

Clement of Rome looks upon bishops as successors to the Apostles, but so far as we can judge he makes no distinction between bishops and presbyters. He does not, unfortunately, give us clear information as to how his presbyter bishops were appointed, but he does tell us that they became the ministers of the Church and the successors of the Apostles because they were appointed in an orderly manner.

In the *Didachē*, the local churches are

[1] The Early History of the Church and the Ministry. Ed. 2, p. 196.

directed to appoint for themselves bishops and deacons. Nothing is said directly about the method of the appointment, but we may presume that it was through ordination, and presumably the ordination by the existing presbyters.

As regards the Church at Alexandria, Jerome gives us the following account: At Alexandria, from Mark the Evangelist to the time of the Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters always appointed one elected from their own number and placed in a higher position as bishop, just as if an army should appoint its own commander, or the deacons should choose one of themselves whose activity they have been acquainted with and make him archdeacon, for what is there except ordination which a bishop does that a presbyter does not do? The date of Heraclas was 232-233, the date of Dionysius 247.

If we turn to Ignatius we find great stress indeed laid upon Church order, but the form in which his directions are put seems to exclude any idea of the necessity of ordination. "Let that be held a valid Eucharist," he says, "which is held by a bishop, or one to whom he has entrusted it." Nothing at all is said about ordination or anything of that sort: it is merely the authority of the bishop as the centre of order. No doubt in Antioch as in the *Didachē*, the ordinary ministers of the Eucharist were prophets, and Ignatius is de-

sirous in the cause of Church order that the prophets should be under the control of the bishop.

In Tertullian we have a statement to the effect that a layman under certain circumstances can celebrate the Eucharist. It is true that this occurs in one of his statements in which he is writing as a Montanist, but his argument would be of no value unless the statement that he makes was accepted by the Church.

So, again, in the Apostolic Church Order, we have this passage: "If the population be small, and there be less than twelve men able to vote for a bishop, let them write to the neighbouring churches, where there happens to be one well established, that three chosen men may come from there and test whether the man to be appointed is worthy." Now surely, in a book of Church order, if ordination through a bishop or a bishop-presbyter were essential it would have been stated. Who ordained the newly appointed bishop we are not indeed told, but it is not unreasonable to see here the beginning of the process by which the consecration of a bishop was always made by bishops coming from other churches.

Then again, in the third century, there is the exaggerated honour paid to confessors. It is stated that a confessor shall be given the position of a presbyter for his confession in his ordination. This custom only lasted probably for a short time and not perhaps everywhere.

No doubt it was found not conducive to Church order, but the point is that if there had been any theory existing in the Church at that time of transmission through Apostolic Succession, or if ordination by a bishop had been looked upon as essential, such a custom could not have existed at all.

If we review all the evidence which comes from the second and, to a certain extent, from the third century, we find that there is no evidence which would justify us in looking upon any form of episcopal, or in fact, any form of ordination as essential for the celebration of the Eucharist. At some period during the second century, by a process of which we have no record, the monarchical episcopacy became the established custom of the Church. I have argued elsewhere that this can only have been through the president or chairman of the college of bishops gradually becoming recognised as the permanent head of the college, and the name bishop becoming attached to him exclusively. At some period again, probably early in the third century, and I venture to conjecture rather through the influence of Hippolytus, that somewhat enigmatic figure in the Church of Rome, whose name is attached to many Church Orders, the rule grew up of consecration by three bishops, and this became, as we have seen, definitely fixed at the beginning of the fourth century. All these changes represent the gradual development of

Church order, and the motive throughout was the establishment of a strong, well ordered society. But there is no evidence at all of transmission of grace as part of the idea of Apostolic succession. The bishop was held to be properly appointed for his office because he was elected by the community, and the election was confirmed by representatives of other churches. He was consecrated in the earlier period probably by his fellow presbyters, at a later date by bishops who came from other places. It was believed that he received divine grace for his work through consecration and the Church prayed through the mouth of the administering bishop or presbyter that he might so receive it; but it was not believed, nor did the theory exist, that grace was transmitted to him from the Apostles. It was from the Church that he obtained his authority, and through the prayers of the Church he received the Holy Spirit which was given to the Church. I do not think that any of the passages quoted by Dr Williams imply more than this. Now, if this account of the origin and developments of the ministry is true, and I believe that it will be found that it accords with the facts, we cannot say that episcopal ordination or consecration or any transmission of grace is necessary for sacraments. There is no reason, on the other hand, why we should not say that the Church has built up this strong and effective basis of order

and unity, and that that is what we should be ready to adopt now, as it was adopted then, as a basis for Church unity.

4

It may be convenient to add to what I have said about the origin of the Christian ministry, the teaching of the Church of England on the point. That teaching is contained in the Preface to the Ordinal and in the twenty-third Article. The Preface to the Ordinal makes it quite clear that it is and always has been the intention of the Church of England that its ministry should be that of bishops, priests and deacons according to the custom and usage of the Christian Church. It is not only that its clergy bear these titles, but they are the orders which have prevailed historically. But though the Church of England has had no doubt as to its own intention and purpose, there is a difference as regards its estimation of the ministries elsewhere. In the twenty-third Article it states that "we ought to judge those lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have publick authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." This Article was in its earliest form drawn up by a joint committee of Anglican and Lutheran divines, and was quite clearly intended to leave it open for the English Church to

recognise ministries which were not episcopal. It makes it clear that the principle that the Church of England recognises is that it is the authority of the Church which gives validity to a ministry. Before 1662 the Preface to the Ordinal did not contain the words referring to episcopal consecration or ordination. These were inserted after the Restoration, because owing to the action of the Presbyterians during the time of the Commonwealth, when an attempt was made to impose presbyterian Church government on the English Church, the relations were more strained.

That this is a right explanation is corroborated by a study of the Anglo-Catholic theologians of the period before the Restoration. Although they are quite definite in their assertion of episcopacy and episcopal ordination, they are not prepared to condemn the orders of other Protestant Churches, or to say that orders can only be given by a bishop. That this statement is correct may be seen in Dr Mason's work on "The Church of England and Episcopacy," who gives a series of passages from the leading divines of the early seventeenth century. I would quote the following three examples. In the Seventh Book of the Ecclesiastical Policy ascribed to Hooker, it is said:—

> "Whereas hereupon some do infer that no ordination can stand but only such as is made by bishops which have had their ordination

likewise by other bishops before them, till we come to the very Apostles of Christ Himself . . . to this we answer that there may be sometimes very just and sufficient reason to allow ordination made without a bishop. The whole Church visible being the true original subject of all power, it hath not ordinarily allowed any other than bishops alone to ordain: howbeit as the ordinary course is ordinarily in all things to be observed, so it may be in some cases not unnecessary that we decline from the ordinary ways."

There is, as you know, some doubt as to whether the Seventh Book comes from Hooker or not. Personally I very much doubt whether anyone but Hooker could have written the extract we have just given; but, in any case, here is an important writer, whoever he may be, of the Elizabethan period, who recognises that the ultimate authority in the appointment of a minister is the Church.

Another example might be taken from the writings of Field:—

"But seeing bishops and presbyters are in the power of order the same; as when the bishops of a whole Church or country fall from the faith, or consent to them that do so, the care of the Church is devolved to the presbyters remaining Catholic; and as in the case of necessity they may do all things

> regularly reserved to bishops only ; . . . so in case of general defect of the bishops of a whole country refusing to ordain any but such as shall consent to their heresies, when there appeareth no hope of remedy from other parts of the Church, the presbyters may choose out one among themselves to be chief and to add others to their numbers by the imposition of his and their hands."

A third testimony, and that I think will be sufficient, is that of Andrewes, who says that although the Anglican form of ordination may be of divine right, it does not follow that salvation is not possible without it or that a Church cannot stand without it. The man would be blind who did not see that there were Churches which stood without it, and his heart would be of iron if he denied salvation to the members of them.

Further, it was considered possible for those not episcopally ordained to hold office in the Church of England. To what extent this practice prevailed is a matter of some controversy, but there is quite sufficient testimony that it was widely held to be possible.

It was the custom also to communicate with foreign Reformed Churches and many instances could be quoted. It is well known, for example, that Bishop Cosin, when in France, communicated with the Reformed Churches, and on both occasions when union

was attempted with the Church of Scotland, no attempt was made to re-ordain those in presbyterian orders. It is not relevant to the argument to point out that these attempts were failures. The causes of their failure have nothing to do with the matter. The point is that there is abundant evidence that the traditional teaching of the Church of England since the Reformation does not condemn as invalid non-episcopal orders. It has never had any doubt or hesitation on the rightness of the episcopate and episcopal ordination, but it has not held that belief in an exclusive way, nor has it ever based its teaching on such a theory of Apostolic succession as would make it impossible for it to recognise orders conferred in another way.

5

We now come to the basis of re-union and on this point the Church of England in its definite statements appears not to have any doubt. It has always laid down the historic episcopate as the basis of union with other Churches. What it has meant by this has not been so clearly defined, but it may be taken to mean that the ministry of the Church should consist of bishops, priests and deacons; that all bishops should be consecrated by three bishops, and all priests and deacons should be episcopally ordained. Further, that the authority of the bishops should be constitu-

tional and that the rights of the presbyters and of the laity in the government of the Church should be recognised. Further we may take it that wherever there is any serious desire for Christian re-union people are prepared to recognise this as the right basis—at any rate, theoretically.

In the conferences which have been held there has been no difficulty about the acceptance of a constitutional and representative episcopacy. So far there has been quite real agreement. The difficulty that arises is as to the status of existing ministers who are not episcopally ordained, after re-union. The difficulty may be put in this way: A rule of the Church of England—a rule which the majority of its members would hold somewhat tenaciously—is that no one who has not received episcopal consecration or ordination can administer the Eucharist in the Church of England. What status then can be given to those not so ordained?

It has been suggested that there should be some form of mutual re-ordination. If two churches unite, the ministry of both churches is changed in its character and scope. Both are given authority which they had not before. It is suggested, therefore, that there should be some mutual ceremony of re-ordination extending for each its ministry. In this way, without any reflection on the orders of either party, each might be made legitimate in the eyes

of the other. No such proposals have been found to be acceptable. It is felt that there is a certain amount of unreality about them. It is felt that whereas one side would think that the re-ordination meant something, the other side would not, and it is not a wise or right thing to do anything which makes the celebration of a Christian sacrament seem to be unreal.

Some other way must be found. The situation is this. On the one side those who have not been episcopally ordained are not prepared to do anything which reflects upon their previous ministry, or the ministry of those of past generations in their church. On the other hand many English Churchmen have conscientious objections to those celebrating in their churches who have not episcopal orders. Exactly the same situation might arise if there were union between the Church of England and the Orthodox Church, or the Church of England and the Church of Rome. Undoubtedly neither of those two unions could take place without some sort of recognition, or economic recognition of orders on both sides. Even if Anglican orders were recognised by the Church of Rome, there would be many members of the Church of Rome who would not feel happy if a priest ordained according to the Anglican form were to say Mass in his Church. On the other hand, although I have known some who have said that they would be

gladly re-ordained for the sake of unity, I do not believe that most of us would think that that was right. We would not wish to throw doubt on our existing orders, we would not desire to repeat an ordination when we felt that to do so was unreal. Exactly what we feel in relation to the Church of Rome, or the Orthodox Church, Nonconformists feel with regard to us. It seems to me that all cases alike should be treated in exactly the same way.

Supposing two churches come together, it should be on the following basis :—

1. They should agree on everything that is essential in the future for the creation and preservation of a proper and regular ministry. That means, of course, for us that it should be a ministry based on episcopal consecration and ordination.

2. That the two churches should mutually recognise one another's ministry.

3. The united ministries should together form the ministry of the united Church, they should take part in all synods and councils and there should be full inter-communion established for all who desired to share in it.

4. That there should not be inter-celebration without special episcopal sanction until the ministries are completely unified.

There is a further argument for such a course. We are all of us ordained to celebrate accord-

ing to a particular rite. We are ordained to celebrate according to the Anglican rite: a Presbyterian according to the Presbyterian rite: a Roman priest according to the Latin rite, and we do not wish to celebrate in any other way. I am sure that personally I should never desire to celebrate either according to the Presbyterian method, or according to the rite of the Church of Rome, although I look upon both those rites as perfectly valid and sound. Nor do I think that any Presbyterian would really like to celebrate according to the Anglican usage.

It may be noted that those arrangements are what prevail at the present time in the Church of Rome. In the Church of Rome there are not only priests of the Latin rite, but also priests of the Greek Uniat rite, the Armenian, and so on. These are not allowed, without special permission of the Pope, to celebrate according to any other rite than that for which they are ordained. It seems really a natural and suitable rule and one which might be adopted universally without throwing any slur on anyone's orders. I believe, then, that reunion should take place on the basis of the historic episcopate and episcopal consecration and ordination and on a recognition of an interim period when inter-celebration should only be allowed by direct episcopal licence.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOUTH INDIAN SCHEME

I HAVE had to refer once or twice to the South Indian Scheme and I may assume that the general character of it is known. To begin with I should like to point out that it seems to be designed to carry out as far as possible the principles which have been laid down by the Lambeth Conference. The original authors of the proposal definitely state that that was their aim:

> "Upon this common ground of the historic episcopate and of the spiritual equality of all members of the two churches, we propose union on the following terms:—
>
> 1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing all things necessary for salvation.
> 2. The Apostles' creed and the Nicene creed.
> 3. The two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself — baptism and the Lord's Supper.
> 4. The historic episcopate, locally adapted.

Further than that, if the various resolutions of the Lambeth Conference on reunion are examined, and especially those relating to reunion with non-episcopal churches, it will be found that they contemplate a period during which ministers who are episcopally ordained and those not episcopally ordained are working side by side.

The following are the conditions laid down by the Lambeth Conference for an interim period before complete unity is attained :—

"Some Provinces of our Communion, while agreeing to unite with a non-episcopal communion on the basis of the acceptance of episcopacy for the future, might be faced with the necessity of providing for the contingency that many ministers who at the time of the union were working in the non-episcopal communion would remain after the union without episcopal ordination. The following suggestions appear to us to satisfy the conditions of local freedom explained above :—

(a) Ministers of both the uniting communions should be at once recognized as of equal status in all synods and councils of the united Church.

(b) The terms of union should not confer on non-episcopally ordained ministers the right to administer the Holy Communion to those congregations which already possess an episcopal ministry,

but they should include the right to conduct other services and to preach in such churches if licensed thereto by the bishop.

(c) All other matters might well be left to the decision of the provincial or general synods of the united Church, in full confidence that these synods will take care not to endanger that fellowship with the universal Church which is our common ultimate aim."

Now I venture to think that the South Indian proposals carry out these arrangements very exactly. They take the advice here given and leave a great deal to the provincial or general synods of the Church in the future. Quite wisely they do not bind themselves.

It is well known that certain arrangements are supposed to exist for thirty years, and that at the end of that time the decision on various points is left to the united Church. Is there anything else which an intelligent body of people could do? Are we really going to lay down rules to bind the Church thirty years hence? We do not know what those thirty years will bring forth. What we say now will be either unnecessary or futile. The following general regulations, I think, will bear out what has been said:—

"It is the intention of the uniting churches that the united Church shall in its legislative

and executive acts respect the conscientious convictions of its ministers and members.

"It will in these matters avoid, on the one hand, any encouragement of licence in condonation of breaches of Church comity and fellowship, and on the other hand, any unchristian rigidity in its regulations or in their applications: and in all its actions it will seek the preservation of unity within, the attainment of wider union, and the avoidance of immediate contests in particular cases.

"The complete spiritual unity within the Church in South India, which is the aim of the uniting churches, will not be attained till all the members of the united churches are willing and wishful to receive communion equally in all of its churches, and it is the resolve of the uniting churches to do all in their power to that end.

"They recognise that the act of union will initiate a process of growing together into one life and of advance towards that complete spiritual unity. If during this process difficulties and anomalies arise the united churches will be careful not to allow any over-riding of conscience by church authorities or majorities; nor will it in its administrative acts knowingly transgress the long-established traditions of any of the uniting churches.

"They believe that these ends can rightly be attained not by the framing of detailed

regulations, but by assurances given and received in a spirit of mutual confidence and love.

"They therefore pledge themselves and fully trust each other that in the united Church no arrangements with regard to churches, congregations or ministers will knowingly be made, either generally or in particular cases, which would offend the conscientious convictions of any persons directly concerned, or which would hinder the development of complete unity within the Church or imperil its subsequent progress towards union with other churches."

I venture to suggest to you that by far the best solution of the difficulties which might arise would be found in the adoption of principles such as these, rather than in particular regulations.

There might indeed be a danger in such a course if there was any doubt in the scheme as to the relation of the uniting churches to the question of church order, and difficulties have been found in the fact that it will be possible for those not episcopally ordained, belonging to churches in communion with the contracting churches to be admitted into the ministry of the united Church. It must be noted, however, that they will not be able to be so admitted unless they have accepted the scheme of reunion. Now that scheme makes it abundantly clear that it is the purpose of the

united Church that it shall be an episcopally ordained church.

"The uniting churches, recognising that the episcopate, the councils of the presbyters and the congregation of the faithful must all have their appropriate places in the order of life of the united Church, accept in particular the historic episcopate in a constitutional form as part of their basis of unity, without intending thereby to imply or to express a judgment in anything concerning episcopacy.

"Every ordination of presbyters shall be performed by the laying on of hands of the bishop and presbyters, and all consecrations of bishops shall be performed by bishops, not less than three taking part in the consecration.

"The uniting churches agree that it is their intention and expectation that eventually every minister exercising a permanent ministry in the united Church will be an episcopally ordained minister."

We have seen that after the reconstruction of the Church of England there was room for a time for those not episcopally ordained to exercise ministry in it, and undoubtedly some did. I see no reason why, in this scheme of reunion, we should be more rigorous than the Church of England was. Moreover, if anyone will look back on Church history, he will see that in the days of the early Church, it was found that there must be some departure from the strict canonical rules when dealing

with the reunion of separated churches. That was quite certainly the case, both as regards the schism of Meletius in Egypt and the Donatists in Africa. All experience and Christian charity and wisdom bid us realise that our ecclesiastical regulations, however valuable, should never be held so rigidly that they cannot be modified for the well-being of the Christian society. I do not believe that there would be any danger to our Catholic position in accepting the South Indian Scheme. I am quite certain that the Eastern Church would apply their principle of economy in such a case, and would recognise to the full the wisdom of our action.

I would only say two things in conclusion. I am afraid, first, I must allude to a line which has been taken by some of the opponents to this scheme. I have nothing to say against those who subject it to criticism. Its opponents and supporters alike demand its most careful scrutiny. But it is quite another thing when those who are opposed to it, say they are not prepared to accept the verdict of the Lambeth Conference or the Church of England as regards it, and that they will not be able to remain in communion with the English Church if it accepts this scheme. I believe they are wrong in their theology, wrong in their Church history, wrong in their theory of the Christian ministry. But that is not the point I wish to make, which is this—that such an action is extraordinarily uncatholic ; it is sheer Protestantism ; it is exactly

the spirit which has always been fruitful of schisms in the past. It means that an individual, or group of individuals, refuse to recognise the corporate action of the Christian Church. Practically, it means that the Council of the English Church Union is to be recognised as authoritative for the Church and not the Lambeth Conference. I do not think if our action as Christian Churches is to be held up in that way, it is possible for us to fulfil our mission and our duty in the world. I think that our right attitude is quite a different one. We should have the courage to trust the spiritual guidance of the Christian Church. We should be prepared to look forward to the future and not feel ourselves bound by every restriction inherited from the past. Perhaps the greatest decision ever made in the Christian Church was that at the first Council of Jerusalem. All traditional sentiment might seem to be in favour of looking upon the regulations inherited from Judaism as fundamental to religious life, but that Council, under the guidance of its more conservative members, recognised the new life which had come through Christ, and boldly went forward to the future, giving freedom to the Gentile churches. They had the courage to make a great decision in the past, and we must have the courage to make such a decision now.

I should like to conclude these lectures by warning you against certain dangers. One of

them is that this desire for reunion may be taken up and promoted on party lines and with a party object. There are some who openly profess that they desire to strengthen the Protestantism of the Church; there are others who openly profess that they desire to strengthen the Catholic elements of the Church. Such motives are dangerous and unsound. They may very likely defeat their own ends. Our motives should be not to benefit Protestantism or to benefit Catholicism, or to strengthen Anglicanism, or any such subordinate aims. What we should realize is that we are to work for increasing the strength of Christianity. I do not think that if we are influenced by these somewhat unworthy motives there will be the slightest chance of success because party aims will produce a reaction on the other side. And I should venture to warn some of those who are most eager for promoting certain schemes for reunion that they should be quite certain about the purity of their motive. I must own I get rather frightened at the resolutions in favour of the South Indian Church scheme which come to me from societies that are always making themselves conspicuous for a narrow ecclesiastical policy. Our aim ought to be twofold—a desire to strengthen Christianity and a desire to give free play to the working of Christian liberty.

And then there is another somewhat similar danger with which we are faced, and that is

the danger of allowing party spirit to destroy any hopes of reunion in any direction at all. If one party in the Church adopts an attitude of violent antagonism to any reunion with nonconformists, or to any scheme like that of South India, or to friendly relations with the Protestant churches on the Continent; and if people actuated by these motives are prepared to go about the country and try to raise up opposition to Christian reunion in that direction; and if, on the other hand, we are told, as I have been told, that the Orthodox Church is superstitious and medieval, and we are exhorted not to have anything to do with it, then it is quite possible that each of these narrow partisan movements may be successful, each of them may be able to put up so strong an opposition as to prevent any greater unity in any direction, and the Church of England may continue to go on in a spirit of self-satisfied insularity and isolation and keep itself entirely apart from all the great movements of Christendom. There is, I think, some danger of that. If we are to be worthy of our position, we ought to be prepared to put ourselves at the head of all movements of reunion in any direction. It is only those who have the courage of leadership who can accomplish anything that is worth accomplishing in the world.

The real attitude that we ought to take towards all schemes of reunion and towards other churches is one which does not try to

impose our own ideas or our own point of view too strongly upon others, but begins by asking whether we ourselves are wrong. The proper attitude for us to take up is not how we can prove other people to be wrong, but rather how far it may not be the case that we are wrong, and if we find that our inherited prejudices or principles are tending to impede more brotherly relations with Christian churches in any direction, we ought carefully to examine those principles and wonder how far they may not be unsound. I do not of course mean that we are to give up all our principles and our own point of view, but I do think it may be necessary for us to learn to modify it. If we look out on to the Christian world we find great varieties of opinion on many points. It is quite clear that some people must be wrong, and there is a considerable chance that we may be wrong. It is quite clear again that some churches must hold things to be of vital importance, which are not so, and very likely we may be amongst that number. I do not accept the infallibility of any other church, and therefore I must be quite willing to recognize that my own church too is not infallible. We want to be ready to approach and to enter into conference with any religious body which is prepared to meet us without assuming the truth in any case of our own particular point of view. That is the attitude through which most of all agreement can come, and I think probably it is

the attitude through which we shall be best able to make everything that is valuable in our own traditions prevail. The mind which is free and open is much better able to give a good account of its beliefs than the mind of those who are prejudiced.

And finally we want courage. I do not think the present is a time for timidity. It is far more important that the world should be Christian than that we should get our own way.

It is always possible to envisage unfortunate results. We must not act thoughtlessly or hastily. We must consider all legitimate criticism. We must look at questions from all sides. But when we see our course clear we must go boldly forward believing that we may trust the future to the goodness of God, not fearing that any weakness of ours, or of our successors, or the powers of evil may pervert our plans to an evil issue. If we are to accomplish anything we must be courageous and trust in God.

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